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# A MOMENT OF TIME



R·W·KAUFFMAN



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IN A MOMENT OF TIME

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"Little Old Belgium"





*From a photograph by A. H. Savage Landor from L'Illustration.*

ALL THAT IS LEFT THEM

The King and Queen of the Belgians on an unconquered strip of sea beach.

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IN A MOMENT  
OF TIME

Argentine Republic  
Buenos Aires  
Sept. 1915

Things Seen on the Bread-Line  
of Belgium

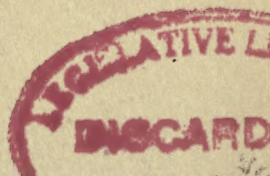
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BY  
REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN



NEW YORK  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY  
1915

Argentine Republic  
Buenos Aires  
Sept. 1915



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TO  
THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN  
OF BELGIUM,

TO  
THEIR AGED AND INFIRM:

To those kindly, peaceable, courageous folk, those thousands who, "*in a moment of time,*" have been robbed of husbands, sons and lovers; who have been tortured, violated; who have lost their homes and means of livelihood; who today face starvation because their protectors scorned temptation and set honor above life; to them and

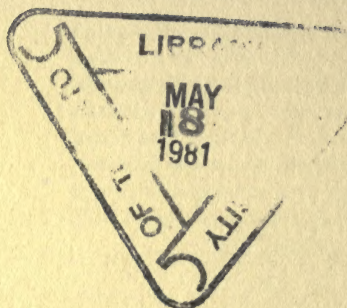
TO  
ALL THOSE AMERICANS  
who are helping them in their dark  
hour of need.

Belgium, 2nd Aug., 1914:

*And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him:*

*"All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine."*

*"Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'"*



## PREFACE

It was my fortune to see something of Belgium in wartime, and I have here tried to tell at least a part of what I saw. Nevertheless, except perhaps for the narrative of the early rush to Ostend and the final bombardment of Antwerp, this is not, in current phrase, "another war-book" at all: it is not an account of deeds observed on the Firing-Line; it is at best but an inadequate record of some incidents observed on the Bread-Line. When I read Mr. E. Alexander Powell's vivid "Fighting in Flanders" and Mr. Richard Harding Davis's thrilling chronicle of his experiences "With the Allies," I perceived immediately that a record of what little I observed of actual fighting would have small value beside those better-informed volumes. But I did see enough of the actual fighting and enough of the suffering of those who could not fight to know that of the

latter and their needs too much could not be written: to feel that it is the duty of every American man and woman who has any first-hand knowledge of the Belgian non-combatants' distress to lay that knowledge before the generous people of the United States. This, then, simply represents my small contribution to the needs of Belgium's innocent dispossessed; I have merely tried to tell my fellow-countrymen, as well as I hurriedly can, a little of what I know of events and conditions that call, and cannot call in vain, for every bit of such help as material gifts can convey.

As for my own attitude toward the rights and wrongs of the present war, it is enough to say that, though the first of August, 1914, found me a neutral, I soon became but a partial neutral, and what I subsequently saw of the things done to inoffensive Belgian burghers and villagers left me, if a neutral, a very *partial* one indeed. I cannot do better than quote Mr. Powell: "I *am* pro-Belgian; I should be ashamed to be anything else." Frankly, it is in this spirit that I have written. I have not

told all that I saw or heard, but I have suppressed nothing that was to the advantage of the Germans, nothing that was to the disadvantage of the Belgians. Several of the incidents narrated came to me at second-hand, but I have set down nothing that did not have plentiful corroboration, and I have repeated nothing that did not come from reliable sources and persons of authority.

Some portions of certain chapters in this book were originally published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Leslie's Weekly*, the *London Chronicle*, the *London Express*, the *Philadelphia Ledger*, the *Philadelphia North American* and the *New York Times*. My thanks are due to the editors of those publications for their permission to reprint.

These portions were of considerable assistance to me, but so far as form was concerned, they for the most part required, when taken from the daily or weekly press and placed in a book, to be entirely rewritten. I landed in New York from England on January 5th, and found that, if it were to appear in time to be

of any effect in assisting the work of the various committees for Belgian relief, the manuscript of this volume must be completed by the fifth of February. That condition I have managed to meet; but it necessitated writing at a speed that I am fully aware has left a great deal to be desired. I hope only that, whatever the lapses due to this hurry, they will not impede the appeal that I have tried to make.

R. W. K.

NEW YORK,

5th February, 1915.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
I SUNSHINE IN BELGIUM . . . . .	13
II STORM . . . . .	28
III WEATHER-SIGNALS . . . . .	59
IV AVALANCHE . . . . .	78
V THE RED RAIN IN ANTWERP . . . . .	108
VI AT THE GRAVE OF A GREAT TRADITION . . . . .	151
VII THE IRON RAIN AT SCARBOROUGH . . . . .	166
VIII BELGIUM IN ENGLAND . . . . .	198
IX "HANDS ACROSS THE SEA" . . . . .	228



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

All that is left them . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
The seductive au revoir of one of the largest sea- side resorts in the world . . . . .	26
Somewhere away from the Germans and some- where near the sea . . . . .	42
The King of the Belgians . . . . .	66
Moving a government . . . . .	80
Homeless . . . . .	92
Antwerp . . . . .	112
This was the beginning of the forty-two centimeter guns . . . . .	140
That flag which he had fought for covered the body of Bobs . . . . .	156
The Spa at Scarborough . . . . .	166
The "Fortifications" of Scarborough . . . . .	174
German shells in England . . . . .	184
There in the middle-distance lay Scarborough . . . . .	196
Despoiled of everything save what they carried in their arms and on their backs . . . . .	210
Dispossessed . . . . .	226
On the bread line . . . . .	242



# IN A MOMENT OF TIME

## I

### SUNSHINE IN BELGIUM

I SUPPOSE it did rain, sometimes, in Belgium. It must have, you know. The land was a garden, and there can't, alas, be gardens without rain, so I suppose Belgium had its wet days even before its Dark Day began. I can't, however, remember any—back there. To be sure my wife says that, on her first visit to Antwerp, there was rain every other hour; but I have only her word for it. To be sure, too, in one of my old diaries I find the entry: "To Bruges on horseback; good roads; some rain"—and, by severe concentration, I do seem to get the faint impression of a few drops falling between vast patches of blue; yet that is probably more suggestion than memory; it is all anything but

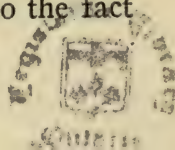
convincing. Certainly I shall ever remember the land as it was during my last stay in it before the Great Storm. No, I really don't recollect any rain in that Belgium whatever. To me it will always remain Smiling Belgium, a country of sunshine.

There are some children born with the muscles of their brows so formed that they cannot frown: Belgium was one of these children. Here and there comes a bit of gently rolling country; behind Namur lies the forest of Ardennes, whence Sir Walter's "Wild Boar" took his soubriquet; but the billows of that rolling country were as smiles passing over the earth's face, and wherever the Ardennes threatened a grim wildness, dead-and-gone Belgians had planted a pretty sixteenth-century chateau to laugh the threat away. All the rest of the land is flat; it is a chess-board on which the squares were green fields, or immaculate villages, and the dividing-lines hedges, or canals, or long, straight, white roads bordered by twin rows of Lombardy-poplars that converged at the vanishing-point. Louvain was only eighty-two

feet above sea-level, Bruges is scarcely thirty. Belgium was topographically impeded from frowning, and she loved the inhibition.

The people themselves were sunshine-folk. Not fair-weather friends in the sense of the proverbial expression—loyal friends for all weathers, the Belgians I knew—but folk that had sunshine coursing through their veins, and could not get rid of it without bleeding to death. They have bled enough now; but then—

You were warmed by it the moment you landed in Belgium. The *douaniers* winked at a few extra cigars; the State Railways took you over a system innocent of that melancholy contrivance elsewhere known as a first-class carriage; the country-folk smiled at you as you passed among their smiling fields; the cities beamed on you from Gothic spire and Flemish tavern. “Brussels”—so runs the Latin rhyme—“rejoices in its noble men, Antwerp in wealth, Ghent in halters, Bruges in pretty girls, Louvain in pundits and Malines in fools”: from only the third and sixth of those statements do I dissent, and I call your attention to the fact



that even the monk who made them could find no adequate verb but "*gaudere*."

Its adequacy persisted until the August of 1914. Industrious, but quiet, the Belgians were; thrifty, but generous and, excepting the Danes, the most hospitable folk under Heaven. Troubles, industrial and other, there sometimes were, but troubles met with a brave smile and contested with a sympathy for the man on the other side of the question: I remember a striking miner—"We must win," said he, "because we are right; but we must not forget that our mine-owners think themselves right also." Those Belgians loved peace and were of a generation unacquainted with war. They maintained a great sea-trade, but were a stay-at-home nation: one friend of mine, who lived within fifty miles of the coast, never saw the ocean until carried in a hospital-ship to England. Their ideals were simple: to obey the laws; to earn as much money as would keep them through a gentle old age; to rear children that would follow in their parents' ways, and to do this cheerfully, enjoying work and taking

time to play, glad to be alive and thanking God for their gladness.

Belgium was once the battle-ground of some of the fiercest of religious-wars (to use that extraordinary phrase) in history; and yet it had become of all lands the least religiously troubled. I do not mean that the Belgians were irreligious. On the contrary, they were a pious people; but I do mean that they become respecters of the individual's right to believe as he pleases, and that to each of them his religion was something to be glad of and not frightened or angry about. I think a Belgian peasant put it correctly: "There are," he said, "only three religions in Belgium—the Church, the Protestants and the Socialists." The Socialists—well, they were what their Mr. Vandervelde is, which is to say very able; the Protestants were very able too; and as for the Catholics, who were in a vast majority, they trooped happily to their beautiful churches: I never saw a frowning priest in Belgium.

Until Germany and the other Great Powers declared it a neutral country, Belgium had been

well called the cock-pit of Europe, had been the convenient field whereto the champions of her big neighbors adjourned to fight out their differences; and yet, once that neutrality appeared assured, Belgium itself became of all nations the most trustingly pacific. Switzerland was guarded by her Alps; Belgium lay open by sea and land. Belgium was between states that shook their fists at one another across that serene head; here were desirable industries, a delectable commerce, an envied ocean-coast. Belgium's wonderful forts had been built more as interesting military experiments than with any thought of actual need; the Belgian army no alien considered seriously. The little country's one real guard was the pledges of the surrounding governments. That was the one real chain of effective fortifications: that Scrap of Paper; but it was backed by the sworn honor of mighty peoples: nothing could harm Belgium. What had people and kingdom to fear?

I used to ask Belgians about their country's position in case of a European conflict: many

sorts of questions of every sort of people. I received only one sort of answer:

"They have given their promise to respect our neutrality. They themselves, jointly, imposed neutrality upon us. That Belgium should be overrun or invaded, that Belgium should be involved in any European war which could occur—it is quite impossible. We have the word of all of them."

That was it, and they said it with a kindly smile for my absurd, my preposterous, forebodings: the statesman and the peasant, the rich merchant of Antwerp and the small farmer of West Flanders. What I suggested simply could not be.

Especially did the people trust Germany. One found it so everywhere. A cabinet-minister said to me:

"Germany has promised to respect our neutrality, and Germany does not break her word. The Germans are not liars."

Said a business-man of Antwerp:

"Belgium's commercial relations with Ger-

many are of the closest and most friendly sort. There are hundreds of Germans in Belgium whom Belgium has made rich. We do all that we can to attract German capital, and, in return, Belgian money pours into Germany: Germany is grateful."

"Germany," declared an Hainaut peasant—"Germany is Belgium's big brother."

This faith had one effect that testifies to the genuineness of its cause. National-anthems are born of international conflicts, or of the expectation of such conflicts. So strong was the Belgian's belief in the Prussian-signed treaty to preserve Belgium's neutrality that he never made himself, musician though he is, a national-hymn. All over England, now, they are playing "*La Brabançonne*" in the belief that it has always been to Belgium what "God Save the King" is to Great Britain. "*La Brabançonne*" was not that. It was, as its name should plainly show, a provincial song of the district of Brabant; it was no more national than "The Lancashire Lass" is "Rule Britannia," or than "Maryland, My Maryland" is

"The Star-Spangled Banner." Only this war has raised it, among the Belgians themselves, to the plane of a national-anthem.

Perhaps I have given you the impression that the Belgians of the Sunny Belgium did not love their country. If so, I have erred. Nowhere, as the terrible test has proved, was there a stronger love of country. But, in quietness, the Belgian's patriotism was quiet. He did not dream of invasion; he had no visions of conquest. To raise his land to a world-power was never among a Belgian's thoughts. His national pride was the reverse of that; it was pride in the contented littleness of Belgium; his national ambition was to show the world a compact, self-sufficient state whose glory was her peace.

Have I wandered from my talk about the physical characteristics of the Belgium and the Belgians that I used to know? My excuse is that those characteristics reflected themselves in the mental concepts of the people: Belgium was quiet and peaceful, because Belgium was merry and clean.

Belgian cleanliness, orderliness: I wonder if ever there were elsewhere their like. The sort of people that have a fondness for the word "quaint" used to apply it to the Belgians, who merited it because they had attitude without pose, because they seized fast hold of everything modern and used it with the simple practicality that all other modern peoples have lost. Over on the Isle of Marken, the mother, already half out of her Amsterdam clothes, screams to her daughter: "Another tourist-boat is coming; hurry and put on your fishermaid-costume—*het te laat is!*" And the dutiful girl strips herself of the latest fashions and prepares to attract twentieth-century money by donning eighteenth-century draperies. The Belgians learned nothing of that from their Dutch cousins: they were themselves, in season and out of it. Nor did they import from southern Italy an association of ideas between the dirt of the present and the monuments of the past; in the Belgium that smiled, age did not necessitate uncleanness, nor did godliness and the worship of God.

"You can eat from the cobble-stones of Antwerp," a Belgian used to say to me, "as safely as from a plate in London."

Eat well you certainly could, anywhere in Belgium. Americans generally called Belgian cookery greasy; but that was because they did not know where to go for the really Belgian food. There were hundreds of wayside-inns where two-francs-fifty bought a *déjeuner* such as no ingenuity can discover and no money purchase in New York; and of the cities Arnold Bennett was right when he said <sup>1</sup> that the dinners of Brussels surpassed all others in the world; nowhere could one—and, better, two—dine so delicately well as at the "Filet de Sole" in the rue Grétry, at the "Lion d'Or" in the same street—at any of the right restaurants in Brussels.

In the largest city and the smallest hamlet there was a deal of excellent thought given to food and drink—not to absinthe or whisky, for of drunkenness there was comparatively little, but to the lighter wines and the local beers of

<sup>1</sup> "Your United States." (Harper & Bros.)

the *estaminets*: the bitter *Uitzet* of Ghent, the sugared *Witbeer* of Louvain; the *Faro* and the *Brune*, and the twenty years' old *Gueuse Lambic*. Food and drink, so right that none wanted too much of either, and dancing, too, and music. Not alone the grand operas of Brussels; for everywhere, after work, the people played. Why, once, in Bruges, I counted three *cafés chantants* on one side of the Groote Markt facing the monument to Jan Breidel and Pieter de Coninc and looking over to the old Tour des Halles. The thirteenth-century turrets of that Belfry echoed back a quite passable imitation of a song from "High Jinks," which I had last heard in the Casino on Broadway, and when the singer had obeyed the summons of the encore, she sat down at a table and completed, by the addition of her brotherer's overcoat, the well-intentioned beginning made by an abortive skirt. Yet the next day Bruges was another city: the tongues of a hundred bells called a pious population to church. There was the hum of Sunday silks and the scent of Sunday soaps. Round-faced Flem-

ings, with round-faced sons and daughters, marched to their churches and, in the afternoon, walked beside their sleepy, tree-shaded canals; and I remember my own walk on one of those Sundays, to the quietest, most peaceful place in the world: a square of green sward and drooping elms shut in by the old church of Ste. Elizabeth and the spick-and-span white-washed houses of the sisters of the Béguinage. I have done a little walking in the Belgian countryside, too, and come to many a tiny inn by night: the first warning that the inn was near was always music.

This can be no attempt at a guide to Belgium: too many Americans knew it well in the days of its sunshine, and of those Americans one at least has not the heart to write at length of smiles that have since given way to tears so very bitter. The green countryside where men tilled the earth and loved it—men that spoke the French of the northwest, men that spoke the Romanic Walloon tongue, and men that spoke the Flemish which the Duke of Alva once made a secret language—none that saw it

can forget its warm charm. The delight of the dunes about Knocke; the innocent gayety of Heyst, with its laughing women that none ever thought would sob, and its brilliant pink-and-orange soldiers that none ever guessed could fight; its promenade a mile long and twenty-odd yards across; its romping children and its military-bands forever playing serenades: who that has been there does not remember them? In every traveler's mind there must remain these pictures: the university at Louvain, which, on the day when Columbus sailed from Palos, was beginning to wonder whether the world were round; Ghent's St. Bavon and her docks where, only a year ago, ships traded in cargoes of flowers; Antwerp's busy streets about her Gothic cathedral and colonnaded Hôtel de Ville; the gayety of Brussels; the smiling quiet of ancient Bruges.

About their canvases in a hundred churches flitted the happy ghosts of Hans Memling and Peter Paul Rubens, of the two David Teniers and Roger van der Weyden, of the three Brueghels and the two Van Eycks. Proud of



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**"THE SEDUCTIVE 'AU REVOIR' OF ONE OF THE LARGEST SEASIDE RESORTS IN THE WORLD"**



the peace that their hard struggles had at last secured, the spirits of Belgium's long catalogue of heroes must have gathered now and then in many a gray keep and on many a disused tower. In the quiet sunshine of a thousand fertile fields, among the whirring machinery of countless prospering factories, their descendants, reared to kindness and bred to comfort, went their busy ways by day and made their simple merriment by night. Contented, useful, industrious, generous: smiling Belgium was all of these.

She had the memory of a splendid past, the certainty of an honorable present, the promise of a warless future—the country of sunshine.

## II

### STORM

IF "War is Hell"—and none can doubt it now—then, when I returned to Belgium in August last, I came to the back door of Tophet—and the door was wide open. I passed at Ostend the night of that day on which the German army occupied Brussels and was said to be throwing out its advance-line toward Ghent.

I had known Ostend more or less intimately for four or five years. Only a few months before its great change, I had answered one of its smiling good-byes—the seductive "au revoir" of a town that was then one of the six gayest and most fashionable seaside resorts in the world. There, set beautifully in the midst of a countryside both industrial and agricultural, was a city of pleasure, with a winter population of about forty-three thousand, which the first months of summer never failed

to raise to eight hundred and seventy-five thousand. Then the crowds came there to be happy; now—

But let me first recall it as it used to be:

From nine o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night, the broad beach is alive with laughing men and pretty women in those scanty bathing-suits that inevitably accompany the modesty of bathing-machines. The Digue, that great stone dyke, often thirty-five feet wide, which runs along the three miles of coast to Mariakirke, is lined with grandiose hotels and flamboyant private villas, and is packed by idlers who have come here to spend money accumulated in every coinage of the two hemispheres. Military bands are playing Viennese waltzes; love is being made in ten languages. Six thousand persons are seated in the Kursaal's concert-hall, six hundred are dancing in its ballroom; to its gaming-salon have come gamblers from over three-quarters of the earth. And all the while the sturdy little trains are steaming into the Station d'Ostendeville, and the sturdy little boats are chugging

up to Ostende-quai, disgorging more bathers, lovers, dancers, gamesters: belles of the Paris boulevards, beaux of Unter den Linden and the Ringstrasse, brokers from Wall Street, invalids from St. Petersburg, card sharps from London.

All that has ended. When last I left Ostend in the dawn of an August morning, it looked as the Lake Front of Chicago must have looked during the Great Fire. When I recall this later picture, I know that nowhere have I ever had so poignantly brought home to me the dire completeness with which a week of war can wipe out a century of peace.

For, in this later picture, the city is still overcrowded, but not with merry-makers; the beach is still alive, but not with laughter. The hotels are closed, the villas shuttered, the bands silenced, the idlers called away. The feet that danced have fled; where the gambler clinked his coins there rattle the bones of poverty; on those yellow sands where lovers so lately whispered, fear elbows fear. The trains bring soldiers; the highways pour in refugees; most

of the boats, except those used for governmental purposes, have ceased to run.

Those women of the boulevards have returned to a stern and saddened Paris; those beaux of Berlin and Vienna are bearing death and destitution to Belgium or facing bullets on the Danube; the Wall Street broker is in Liverpool, vainly trying to draw against his now valueless letter-of-credit for a steerage-passage home; the Russian invalids are being hurried across Denmark, and the London plunger has gone back to an England that clamors for more and more men to send to the front. Its guests departed, its industries discontinued, its port empty, Ostend the garish has become a city of Dreadful Night; is little better than it was in 1604, when, with the French and English, as now, its allies, it capitulated, after a three-years siege, to Ambrogio di Spinola, the Genoese.

Our boat, on which I may as well at once say that I had no business to be, had lurched through the earlier darkness without a light

showing. To me, standing well forward on the spray-soaked deck, it seemed that we could not yet be anywhere near shore: we were but a black thing pitching desperately about limitless black space—when suddenly we were drenched in a hideous blue radiance.

I can give you no idea of the shock except to say that it must have been much as it would be for a blind man were he to regain his sight at an instant when his unexpected eyes were fixed on the noonday sun. Under it, we were worse than blind. I believe that there was no one on board who did not stagger from this sudden effulgence as though from a blow in the face. It was war-time Ostend's combined military searchlights accurately spying us out, plucking us from our secret darkness with a long arm of illumination that made our approach more public than an approach at two o'clock in the afternoon.

There were sharp orders—megaphonic cries out of the night—there was the clank of machinery. Our engines jolted, stopped; chains rattled; a whirling boat jumped alongside, and

an officer and six soldiers swarmed, like so many rats, over the dipping rail.

That officer, when he had satisfied himself of our captain, came upon me. I had a camera and a pair of field-glasses slung across my shoulders. He turned a pocket flashlamp on my passport, marked it, returned it and said:

"It is necessary that you surrender this camera." He spoke the thick French of a Fleming. "When you leave the port to return to England, it will be given back to you; but now not to surrender it is to be arrested."

I was not yet used to war: I said I was an American citizen, and—

"It is necessary that you surrender this camera," he interrupted me by repeating. "When you leave this port to return to England, it will be given back to you; but now not to surrender it is to be arrested."

I was not arrested.

When he had possessed himself of my camera, he asked:

"Are you a journalist?"

I told him no; for when I entered newspaper

work, eighteen years ago, the head copyreader assured me that I should never become one. Besides, the English newspapers had flung broadcast the information that all correspondents in Belgium not citizens of one of the allied powers would be shot. Everything considered, I held it best to account for my presence at Ostend in another way; so I said that I was an American tourist and added what appeared to me to be an adequate reason for such a person to be at such a place on such an occasion: long experience had shown me that Europeans consider all American tourists a little crazy, and I wanted every allowance possible made for me.

Then the officer looked at my binoculars and saw that they were of German manufacture. I had to produce my passport again and explain that I had bought my glasses in New Orleans. . . .

Ostend, when they finally permitted me ashore, was less familiar to me than when I visited it for the first time. That first time, I knew it by pictures and guide-books; later,

as I have said, I came to know it well from many visits there; now I could scarcely find my way about in it. The very streets seemed to have shifted their positions: it was a nightmare-town.

Picture to yourself Atlantic City in mid-season—its gayety stopped as by a single shot; its visitors fled in fright; its accustomed life brought to a standstill, sudden and complete. Imagine the bulk of its male citizens, as its music ceased in the middle of a bar, whisked away to battle. Imagine military rule then as suddenly substituted for civil law—the banks closed; food-prices mounting; the electric cars with women conductors, and old men in the drivers' places; no boats in the Inlet; no rolling-chairs, no ponies, no bathers in view; the hotels shut tight; sentinels at the corners; Philadelphia captured by an advancing enemy; Camden occupied; a wing of the invaders creeping upon Manhattan; a line of flaming battle all along the Pennsylvania boundary to the New York State line; and the hostile forces, with death in their hands, coming nearer—nearer—over the

flatlands, perhaps through the water, now and then visibly through the clouds of the air.

Pour into that Atlantic City, thus disorganized, stunned, panic-smitten, three times its accustomed population, in the shape of all the country-folk from the Delaware River on the west and from all the nearby towns to the south and north. Fill the Pennsylvania Railroad Station with them; fill the Reading Railway Station; crowd them along all the pavements of all the streets, up the Boardwalk and down; toss them on to the beach—women, children and old men, some wounded, more ill, all robbed of their material possessions, and many of them robbed of the lives of those they loved best on earth.

Do this, and you have Ostend as I saw it.

It was a town of wandering and frightened ghosts unable to give any reason for the start of that horror which had overtaken them—a town full of those who mourned their dead and themselves expected at any hour to die.

Ostend faces the North Sea—a body of water that has not yet had its bloody rebaptism

as the German Ocean—with the canal running at right angles on the east. Our boat had come up this latter, and I landed at the Station Maritime. That brought me well to the back of the city, to reach the center of which I had to cross a drawbridge to the Quai de l'Empereur and so make my way past the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul to the wide rue de la Chapelle and the town-hall.

No sooner had I come to the plaza on which stands the big, twin-towered church than I was in the midst of the refugees; and from that moment, wherever I went about the town, I remained surrounded by them. I was caught in a troubled, forward-trudging, endless tide, making northward—rustics in all the picturesque costumes of their respective countryside; women with babies at their breasts; toddling children crying and tugging at their mothers' skirts or their grandfathers' jackets; white-haired men bent double with age; girls with swollen eyes and boys with lips compressed; the lame, the blind and the deformed.

I saw one young woman in a bedraggled

wedding-dress, the veil hanging in tatters down her back to her heels, her hair flying, a veritable Ophelia. They told me that her fiancé had been called to the front on the day preceding that set for her wedding: she had become insane and insisted on wearing her marriage costume when she fled with her mother from the oncoming Germans.

I saw two tottering graybeards with crêpe rosettes on their hats, and they explained to me that they had been mourners at a funeral in their village when, with a clattering of hoofs and a rattle of shots, an advance party of Uhlans suddenly appeared: the coffin was dumped into its grave; the service ended in a sentence; the entire funeral party took to its heels.

The majority of these fugitives were in their bright holiday clothes, the pretty fête-garb that artists have for centuries celebrated, that camera-bearing tourists have for years "snapped," and that the omnipresent picture-postcard has everywhere familiarized. I asked why this was so.

"Because," was always the answer, "they are the best we have, these clothes. This was the easiest way to carry them, and we did not want to leave them behind for the enemy."

It is difficult to convey by merely written words the horror of these flight-soiled and dust-stained gala garments in that night of terror and of death.

Every human being at all able to carry anything carried some bundle, always heavier than the weakness of its bearer should have had to endure, filled with such household treasures—old heirlooms, convertible property, or pathetic keepsakes—as could be snatched in the first high heat of flight. One woman of seventy had a bulging cotton handkerchief tied to her shrunken waist: it was stuffed with the silver buttons cut from the clothes of her long dead parents—"the happier for being dead," said she—and from those of her husband and sons, now somewhere on the firing-line. Here and there a bearer stumbled or was jostled by a companion, and her bundle fell to the pave-

ment and burst open, belching its poor contents into the dirty street.

Along the curb fugitives, fainting from wounds or worn out from exertion, would fall or sink to the ground, and lie or sit there inert, spent, until a soldier would shoulder his way through the press and rouse the weary or carry off the ill. Some were bleeding, more were bandaged, nearly all were footsore.

The streets were only partially lighted—the streets of that Ostend which the Belgians used to call their “White City.” Every few paces, his bayonet fixed to his musket, an infantryman stood on guard. Hussars rode by, scattering the throngs that filled every thoroughfare—throngs, as I should earlier have noted, uncannily silent. The market-place, the Parc Leopold, and the whole outdoors of the town, from the sea to the rue du Claire, and from the canal to the avenue de la Reine, were full of these Belgian villagers, disqualified by age or sex or infirmities from fighting and driven out of their homes by the German invasion of

a land whose neutrality the German had sworn to respect.

The beach was packed with bivouacking refugees; whole families, less their military-members, were huddled about the piles of bundles that they had flung together in their Flemish hamlets before running from those cottages which had housed their ancestors for generations and leaving them to destruction. On the paved streets, the newcomers, though they rarely spoke, made a deafening tattoo with their wooden shoes, and in every open space they heaped their hampers, trussed belongings and hodge-podge salvage. Still others, mixed with a sprinkling of wounded soldiers, flooded the railway station, sat on decrepit trunks and handbags, sprawled sick or sleeping on the floor. And finally, from along the seacoast and by every highway and bypath that leads from the southeast, trudged and straggled in the vast majority: those peasants who had been unable to find standing-room in the cars or money to pay for it.

"Where do you expect to go?"—Again and again I asked that question.

Nobody knew.

"What do you expect to do?"

The answer was always the same: a helpless gesture with the eloquently opened hands.

None appeared to have considered his ultimate destination, or seemed much to care, so long as that destination was somewhere away from the Germans and somewhere near the sea. No provision, so far as I could learn, had as yet been made by the municipal authorities to feed or house these seekers for the city's protection; of individual charity there was a great deal, much of it touching; but of organized charity there was then no visible sign. Yet everybody was sure that the invaders would come in, out of their prescribed way, to the sea-front: with the agrarian's faith in stone walls, everybody trusted to this town for shelter; their single object was to get as far away from the hostile army as possible and to remain there as long as might be.

Rumor, of course, was rampant and gen-



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"SOMEWHERE AWAY FROM THE GERMANS AND SOMEWHERE NEAR  
THE SEA"



erally unfounded: the Germans had set fire to Ghent; a party of Uhlans had reached Bruges and blown up its famous bell-tower; the burgo-master of Alost had been hanged from a lamp-post. And the odd thing was—the odd thing and, in at least one fine sense, the splendid thing—that they had more to say, these peasants, of the wrong done their country than of the horrors wrought upon themselves. Perhaps they had been too severely stunned by their individual misfortunes to be ready at once to speak of them; perhaps those injuries were too deep for immediate discussion: that would be the cynic's, and it might be the right, explanation. For my own part, I like to think otherwise, and my acquaintance with the Belgian character supports me. In any case, the fact remains that every refugee whom I talked with during that panic-night—and I talked with scores—spoke first of his country and spoke only under pressure of himself. It was not that the fugitives resented the inquiries of a stranger; on the contrary, they seemed particularly anxious to discuss the violation of

Belgian neutrality with any one having the smallest chance of reaching the American public's ear: the truth, I am convinced, was higher than casually appears. These wanderers had been despoiled of everything save what they carried in their arms and on their backs; they had nothing—absolutely nothing—besides; sons, fathers, brothers had been slaughtered; daughters, mothers, sisters had been ravished; penury was upon them, starvation scarce a day beyond; and yet their chief thought was of their country.

“But what have we done—what has the little Belgium done?” That was ever their query of the unanswering sky. “Always we have considered the great Germany as it were our big brother who had promised to protect us, and suddenly it bids us help it against our own pledge to another neighbor, and when we protest, it burns not only our forts, but our houses; it kills not only our soldiers, but our women, our old men, our children! Why? We cannot guess; we receive no reply but the bullet. Why?”

One different note I heard. It was sounded by the quavering voice of an octogenarian: two days before he had been the owner of a small house and garden near Auderghem, on the Termonde road; to-night he was penniless and starving.

“Where is the Belgian cottager’s quarrel with the cottager of Germany?” he cried. “Does it matter to us whether Russia and Servia killed that Austrian Grand Duke, or only Servia alone? Are our crops any better or any surer because Germany gains a seaport or France retakes Alsace and Lorraine? Not a bit; but, just as if it mattered everything, we must die for it!”

Later, some such feeling I found in every one of them: they must die for it; and yet they were dying without any more complaint than can be put in the compass of a few questions—some in stolid hatred; some stoically; many with gladness. In their own disillusioned way, even the bitterest were splendidly loyal. It was a significant fact that, among all those hundreds of the dispossessed and fugitive,

there was not one sound-bodied man of fighting-age: those were all at the war.

Women and children and old men—every road leading away from the German advance must have been stained with their blood. I talked with a tottering woman of twenty-five whose husband had been called to the colors and killed in the first day's fighting about Liège. She had with her a son of five, who was staggering under the weight of his eighteen-months-old sister; another sister carried a basket as large as herself, and the mother had in her arms an infant that she vowed had been born to her on the roadside only thirty-six hours before.

"Have you no relatives?" I asked her.

She shook her head.

"No friends?"

"They are dead or lost since the day before yesterday."

"Then what will you do?" I helplessly urged her.

She made the sign of the cross.

"What the good God wishes," she said.

A few yards behind her, a girl, who might have been eighteen years old, was lying where she had fallen a minute since. She was beautiful, with black hair and creamy skin; and her face, illuminated by the rays of a lantern in the hand of a passing fugitive, was very calm. A wound, some one explained, had reopened: a wound inflicted by a stray shot some days since. I bent over to speak to her: she was dead.

Making my way out of the town, I stemmed the human tide along the Bruges Canal, near Stalhillebrugge. A white-bearded man that I passed was carrying in his arms a black-haired little girl of three or four years, sound asleep.

"Your granddaughter?" I asked.

No, she was not his granddaughter.

It was not pleasant to persist in probing wounds still raw, but I persisted:

"Surely not your daughter?"

"No," he said simply. "The poor little one was wandering along the road with the rest of us and said her mother had been hurt in a cannonade in their village—killed, I suppose.

I do not know whose child she is. My faith! There are many such in these bitter days, monsieur."

I nearly stumbled over two youngsters, tramping hand in hand—a boy and a girl, the former manfully supporting and encouraging his companion. They spoke French of sorts, as many of these Fleming peasants seemed to do; and I found that they were brother and sister, aged respectively ten and eight.

"And yet you are alone in this crowd? Where is your father?" I asked.

The boy's answer came proudly:

"My father is one of our little soldiers. He is with his regiment. By now, they say, he is safe in one of the Antwerp forts: they will never take those forts, the Germans."

"And your mother?"

The little girl began to cry.

"We do not know," she sobbed.

The boy beckoned me aside.

"It is not good that my sister should understand," he whispered. "While she was at the cottage of a neighbor, a German shell struck

our house. It tumbled the roof down on us. My mother was cooking. A beam hit her and crushed her against the fireplace. She was killed. Jeanne—that is my sister's name: Jeanne—I have not told: she is too young to be told."

I could multiply these instances by many gathered during that one night's observations: but to what purpose? I have set down a few, and these merely to give a hint of the whole. Nor have I selected the worst, for the worst may not be told. No victim of the invader—I repeat it because it seems to me so full of meaning—was eager to volunteer his testimony; there was none of the volubility of the mendicant; none of the whine of the beggar, the loquacity of him who wants charity. The barest facts were all that were mentioned, and these only upon a repeated questioning not willingly undertaken on my part, but undertaken in a desire to learn and report to my own country a little of the tremendous truth. The refugees in Ostend expected nothing; they had almost ceased to hope for anything; they had fled

from their ruined homes because there was nothing left for them to live upon, because they could not fight, because they were driven, not so much by fear of the German sword, already red with the blood of their relatives and friends, as by the blind human instinct that makes for flight when fight has become impossible. They were unimportant people; had they all stayed in their homes to be slain there, the great world would not have missed them, would have got along quite comfortably; probably not a dozen of them had been known beyond a radius of ten miles from his native hamlet; I dare say they really didn't matter—but they were uncommonly like you and me.

One other detail merits mention here: Even in those early days of the war, when the queer censorship in England was delighting in the full exercise of its power, and when almost no news was allowed to trickle into the columns of the free British press—even then in England, where I was living, we had begun to hear something about that ill-treatment accorded by the German troops to non-combatants, the full

accounts of which were already stirring America. About this I made more inquiries than one.

A cripple, whose deformity saved him from military service, said that he had been in a hamlet near Oreys when the enemy entered it.

"I was in my cousin's cottage," he said. "We heard the noise of horses' hoofs, and then the smashing of doors and the tinkle of glass from breaking windows. German soldiers came into the room in which we were sitting, so quickly that we had not yet got to the window to look out to see what was the matter. That was the way always: everything happened so quickly that it was over before one could understand what it was all about. . . . Those soldiers beat me and the women. Why? I don't know why. When my cousin protested—when he asked them why they did it—they knocked his brains out with their rifle-butts before his old wife's eyes."

I had heard that the Germans always declared such actions to be reprisals for resistance on the part of non-combatants; but in Ostend I

was told only one story that could at all substantiate that contention. It was this:

A young mother said that, in her village, the invaders had shot several private citizens and burned their houses, but not without first accusing the victims of firing on the passing soldiery.

"Were those accusations true?" I wondered.

She did not know. There had been firing from some of the other houses; but whether or not from those subsequently burned, she could not be sure. Even if there had been offenses, the offenders were only women and children and old men: a squad of a half-dozen healthy soldiers could have ended the troubles by a few arrests. Her neighbor, a woman of her own age, had been flogged for tossing a pot of boiling water on the enemy's troops; and another, a friend, was treated even worse when she showed herself loath to furnish food to the invaders.

"But what would you?" asked my informant.

"My neighbor's man had been killed by them

at Liège; and as for my friend, is it that we should feed the enemies of our country?"

Elsewhere I shall tell some of the tales that I heard of deeds done against the defenseless and the unoffending. Here it is pleasant to be able to set down two stories of a different sort:

A man who must have been nearly ninety, and was mounted on a horse correspondingly ancient, said that the animal had been brought to him by some German soldiers when he told them he had a younger brother in Ostend who, could he but reach that city, would care for him; and an old woman showed me a handful of German money—one mark and two mark pieces—which she said a Prussian lieutenant had given her to facilitate her journey to her daughter's Ostend home. Among all the too-well authenticated tales of German atrocities, it is good to place these two stories of another sort. I wish that I knew the names of those soldiers and that lieutenant and could record them here.

One other word I should say here and now, and that has to do with the Germans as marksmen. My previous observation of target-practice in the German army had given me a low opinion of these men as rifle-shots; and, since the first days of the war, the American, French and English newspapers united in the declaration that the contest showed the German infantryman to be a poor hand with a gun. That opinion, I am told, still obtains in this country: so far as I am concerned, it was controverted during this visit to Ostend and has never since been reestablished.

There, among all the soldiers and fugitives that I talked with, every word of testimony belied the current rumor. I heard, indeed, some remarkable tales of German shooting skill, and nearly every wounded soldier that I saw had been hit in either the head or chest. Moreover, I am bound to add that the wounds were clean: the bullets that made them had not been flattened and were not "soft-nosed." Signs of wrong were plentiful enough, and some of them must be told in another chapter;

but I discovered no proof that the use of the dum-dum was among the crimes committed by the Germans in Belgium.

I walked some miles in the general direction followed by the Bruges Canal, dodging sentries without difficulty, and stopping to talk with scores of refugees. I was going along a track that, in times of peace, is a highway of industry; but so far as the night would let me judge, that industry has been hopelessly crippled.

Every citizen of Ostend whom I spoke with substantiated this impression. Mills are empty, factories silent; the crops rot in the fields; commerce is dead. It is as if some enormous and final blight had settled upon the entire countryside. It is a situation that, if brought about by flood or plague, would cause meetings for succor and open subscription-lists for assistance in every country throughout the civilized—or once civilized—world. It means poverty and death—it has already brought poverty and death—to thousands of people who have never seen more than the maps of

Germany, of Austria, of Turkey: it is the seamy side of the glorious coat of War. . . .

I turned about and joined the army of fugitives, falling into slow step between a woman nursing her baby and her grandfather nursing a bullet-shattered arm. The wayside was cluttered with *débris*: peasants had tried to carry away only what was of some little value among their scant possessions, and had found that little too much, and flung it aside; and other peasants were too heavily laden to assist or rob. Some women had stretched themselves beside their poor treasures and fallen asleep with those treasures for pillows. A few were praying. Others were crying softly from wounds, illness and hunger.

It was good to come again to the Station Maritime—and to my scrupulously-retained camera. It was better to feel the engines chugging under my feet and, in the red dawn, the spray of the familiar and unchanged North Sea on my face.

I did not want to look back, but I had to look back. As we pulled out into the open water,

I fancied I could still see that haggard, silent tide of peasants in their ruined festival clothes, with their only remaining possessions in those heavy bundles—old men, cripples, women and children: the chaff of war, ill, starving, despoiled. Overhead there soared what looked like a sinister bird of prey, surviving from some wild antediluvian era.

“That’s a German aëroplane,” said the matē, who stood beside me. “A *taube*, that’s wot its name is: a dove, you know, sir. Dove o’ peace! Wot?” He spat into the blue water, then returned his now reflective gaze to that monster of the sky. “They tell me,” he presently resumed, “that it’s costing, in pay, ammunition and food, four million four hundred thousand pounds a day to run this war, and the half o’ that comes out o’ Germany.”

For the Germans’ pay, ammunition and food—for their soldiers, in other words—almost eleven million dollars a day to wipe the very name of Belgium from the map of Europe. How much, among the Germans themselves, in spoiled industry and commerce—in human

blood and human life, off as well as on the firing-line—in the heartbreak of German women and the ruin of German children? How much in shattered ideals—in the setback to civilization—in the reawakening of the savage, who sleeps, at best of times, so lightly in us all? Belgium? For a while, at least, they have succeeded there; they have indeed obliterated her. But the hand that wiped her from the map of Europe has engraved her on the hearts of men.

### III

#### WEATHER-SIGNALS

WHAT brought about so terrible a change upon the once smiling face of Belgium? This and all it stands for:

Extract from a Proclamation to the Municipal Authorities of the City of Liège.

August 22, 1914.

The inhabitants of the town of Andenne, after having declared their peaceful intentions, have made a surprise attack on our troops.

It is with my consent that the Commander-in-Chief has ordered the whole town to be burned and that about one hundred people have been shot.

I bring this fact to the knowledge of the city of Liège, so that citizens of Liège may realize the fate with which they are menaced if they adopt a similar attitude.

The General Commanding in Chief,  
(Signed) VON BÜLOW.

That quotation is no manufactured evidence. It is an authentic copy from a proclamation is-

sued by the German general in command of the German army at Liège. It has never been denied, either by him or by his Government. It is a fair sample of a flood of German military proclamations issued throughout Belgium. It states the German's case in the German's own words.

Contrast with this the proclamations that, upon the staggeringly amazing advent of the invaders, the Belgian Government issued and caused to be posted in every Belgian city, town, village and countryside. They dotted the walls; they met the most casual eye along every road; they were amplified by the personal instructions of every policeman in every locality. Reprinted frequently in the newspapers of the United States, they are already familiar to all Americans. It is sufficient here to repeat that these proclamations instructed "*the civil population not to participate in any way in military operations*" and commanded the surrender to the authorities of *all arms in the possession of civilians*.

It has been suggested by some German sym-

pathizers that the Belgians were so illiterate as to be unable to read these proclamations. The reply to that, laying aside the verbal digests of the proclamations made everywhere by the police, is to be found in a Belgian governmental report on illiteracy made in 1913. In treating of the provinces in which the German atrocities were subsequently committed, this report shows the percentage of illiteracy among men liable to militia service and may therefore be taken as a fair test of the entire younger population—in other words, of the people whom the invaders charged with firing upon German troops. Here are the figures:

	Illiterates. Per Cent.
For the Province of Brabant . . . . .	1.15
For the Province of Liège . . . . .	0.99
For the Province of Limbourg . . . . .	0.52
For the Province of Luxembourg . . . . .	0.20
For the Province of Namur . . . . .	0.29

Obviously, we must seek our explanation elsewhere.

The Kingdom of Belgium, as it existed in August, 1914, was a neutral country, and had

been since its beginning. Neutrality was inherent in its inception. In fact, *only on its promise of neutrality did the Great Powers allow it to come into being.* Upon its declaration of independence, those Powers—Prussia, Austria, Russia, France and England—on June 26, 1831, signed and promulgated “The Treaty of Eighteen Articles,” which specifically ordered:

“Belgium, within the limits traced in conformity with the principles laid down in the present preliminaries, shall form a perpetually neutral State. The Five Powers, without wishing to intervene in the internal affairs of Belgium, *guarantee her that perpetual neutrality as well as the inviolability of her territory. . . .*

“By just reciprocity, Belgium shall be held to observe this same neutrality toward all the other States and to make no attack on their internal or external tranquillity whilst *always preserving the right to defend herself against any foreign aggression.*”

These same terms were reiterated in the de-

definitive treaty of January 23, 1839, accepted by Belgium and guaranteed by the Powers.

From that year until last, all parties kept their pledge. Belgium maintained no army, save for the purposes of defense; England, France, Russia and the Germanic empires never trespassed. When, in 1870, as now, the two of those Powers lying on either side of Belgium were at war, she was left unmolested: her neutrality was considered so sacred that even the German wounded in France might not be carried through her territory to their home-hospitals.

Germany, indeed, was especially punctilious and protective. Not only once, but often, she officially expressed her friendliness and was at pains to pose as Belgium's protector. No longer ago than 1910, Kaiser Wilhelm II paid, at Brussels, a state visit to the King of the Belgians, formally pronounced his admiration of Belgium's institutions and thanked that nation for its many kindnesses to German residents and for the opportunities that it gave them to make their fortunes within its borders.

In 1913, the same Kaiser sent his general, von Emmich, as his empire's special representative to the Belgian King's fête at Liège, bearing "the solemn assurance" of Germany's friendship and protection.

Then, on Sunday, the second of August, 1914, Germany handed Belgium the following ultimatum and demanded a reply *within twelve hours*:

"The German Government has received positive information according to which French forces *intend* to march upon the Meuse by way of Givet and Namur. This information leaves no doubt as to France's *intention* to march upon Germany through Belgian territory. The Imperial German Government cannot help fearing that Belgium, in spite of *her willingness to prevent this*, may not be in a position to repulse, without assistance, a French movement of such proportions. This fact is significant evidence of a French attack directed against Germany.

"It is Germany's imperative duty of self-preservation to forestall this attack of the enemy.

"The German Government would greatly regret if Belgium should regard as an act of hostility directed against herself the fact that the steps taken by Germany's enemies oblige her, on her side, *to violate Belgian territory*.

"In order to avoid any misunderstanding, the German Government declares the following:

"1st: Germany does not contemplate any hostile act against Belgium. If Belgium—in the war which is imminent—will consent to adopt an attitude of friendly neutrality toward Germany, the German Government on the other hand promises that, when peace is concluded, it will protect the Kingdom and all its possessions to their fullest extent.

"2nd: Germany promises, on the condition set forth above, to evacuate Belgian territory as soon as peace is concluded.

"3rd: If Belgium preserves a friendly attitude, Germany declares herself ready, in concurrence with the authorities of the Belgian Government, to buy for ready cash everything necessary to its troops, and to indemnify Belgium for the damage caused in her territory.

"4th: Should Belgium behave in a hostile manner toward German troops, especially by placing difficulties in the line of their march, or by resisting with the forts of the Meuse, or by destroying highways, railroads and tunnels or other works, Germany shall be obliged to consider Belgium as an enemy.

"In that case, *Germany will make no promises* to the Kingdom, but will leave to the decision of arms the regulation of the ultimate relations of the two States toward each other. The German Government is justified in hoping that this eventuality will not arise, and that the Belgian Government will take appropriate steps to prevent its arising. In that case the friendly

relations of the two States will become closer and more lasting."

Belgium's reply is already famous. It was to this effect:

"The intentions which she (Germany) attributes to France are in contradiction to the formal declarations made to us under date of August 1st in the name of the Government of the Republic.

*"Moreover, if, contrary to our expectations, the country's neutrality should be violated by France, Belgium would fulfill its international duties, and her army would oppose a most vigorous resistance to the invader."*

"The treaties of 1839, confirmed by the treaties of 1870, perpetuate Belgium's independence and neutrality under the guarantee of the Powers, and especially under the guarantee of the Government of his Majesty the King of Prussia.

"Belgium has always faithfully observed her international obligations; she has fulfilled her duties in a spirit of loyal impartiality; she has neglected no opportunity to maintain her neutrality and to cause it to be respected by others.

"The attack upon her independence with which Germany menaces her is a flagrant violation of the law of Nations.

"No strategic interest can justify the violation of that right.

"The Belgian Government, by accepting the propositions mentioned, would sacrifice its national honor



*Photographed from the bust by Gafton Nys, now one of the Belgian refugees in America.*

#### THE KING OF THE BELGIANS

"If the Belgian Government be disappointed in its expectations, it is resolved to repulse by every means in its power an attack upon its rights."



and betray at the same time its duty toward Europe.

"Conscious of the rôle which Belgium has played for more than eighty years in the civilized world, it refuses to believe that its independence can only be preserved at the price of a violation of its neutrality.

"If the Belgian Government be disappointed in its expectations, it is resolved to repulse by every means in its power any attack upon its rights."

A part of what instantly followed, the world already knows; the whole of those horrors it can never know. Here and now, considering that the Belgian reply speaks for itself, I want to call your attention to some of the italicized phrases in the German ultimatum: the italics, of course, are my own.

Germany, which helped to make Belgium's birth as a nation dependent upon her neutrality, has offered only one excuse for the German army's violation of that neutrality: she has said that, at the time of issuing her ultimatum to Belgium, French troops had already entered Belgium. But she has never produced one scrap of evidence to support this contention; of the alleged proofs that she discovered upon her seizure of the Belgian Government offices in

Brussels—as if, were they guilty of conspiracy with France, the Belgians, leisurely evacuating their capital, would be fools enough to leave such incriminating documents behind them!—she has, among all her frantic attempts at justification, failed to publish a single instance; and, above all, she did not mention this French invasion in her ultimatum: at a moment when she desperately wanted an excuse to send her own troops into Belgium, at a moment when her diplomats were racking their brains for raising to the plane of “a military necessity” what is now shown to be no more than a barbaric advantage, Germany could find nothing better to charge than “positive information” of France’s *intention*.

This cannot be too strongly insisted upon. The tone of that ultimatum was not the tone of diplomatic suggestion and polite innuendo; it was a downright threat. Not even a German apologist would call it restrained. Had Germany had “positive information” of France’s actual invasion instead of “positive information” of “France’s *intention*” to invade, the

tone of this very ultimatum shows that she would have shouted it to Belgium and blazoned it to the world. Is it to be supposed that a spy-system which can obtain "positive information" of the mere *intention* of an enemy's march, could not obtain any information of *an actual march* on the part of that enemy?

We are compelled, then, to conclude that Germany was telling the truth when, on August 2d, her ultimatum made it clear that she had no belief in a French violation of Belgian neutrality as a thing already accomplished—compelled to conclude that she was then telling the truth in spite of her later declarations that she was lying. Therefore, when Belgium bravely asserted her right to resist invaders, Germany, on her own showing, "*violated Belgian territory*," the neutrality of which she had sworn to protect. She did this "*making no promises*" in case of resistance to her, although, in the same breath *admitting Belgium's "willingness to prevent" France's alleged intention to invade*. In other words, she perjured herself for no better reason than that she had heard

France intended to commit perjury. It was only two days after the issuance of the ultimatum that, from the tribune of the Reichstag, the Chancellor of the German Empire admitted:

"Our troops have occupied Luxembourg, and are perhaps even now trampling upon Belgian soil: This act is contrary to the law of Nations."

It might be pleaded that, in resistance to an invader who is breaking "promises voluntarily given," a civilian population would have some excuse. In the case of Belgium, there is no necessity so to plead. Consider the facts.

The Belgian Government did, as we have seen, its best to keep its non-combatant citizens within bounds: its hands are, beyond all cavil, clean. All that the Germans seriously charge is that the Belgian Government's efforts were here and there futile.

Is this correct? Did Belgian civilians disobey their Government's instructions? Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that they did. Let us grant that certain villagers, surprised

and robbed by the troops of a Power which they had previously believed to be friendly, offered, in defense of their "threatened homes," a certain impotent resistance: one, a dozen, a score, even a scattered hundred, against the vast Imperial German Army. By the Second Article of the Hague Convention, "if the arms be carried openly and the rules of warfare be respected," such acts are authorized "*as long as the territory is not effectively invested and occupied by the enemy.*"<sup>1</sup>

Go further. Admit what cannot possibly in every case be true: admit that, in each instance of outrage, the arms of those Belgian civilians who were said to shoot, had not been "carried openly"; that "the rules of warfare" were not respected; that the immediate territory *was* at those times "effectively invested and occupied by the enemy," does ordinary justice and common humanity—I am not talking now of "civilized" war, but of the ordinary justice and common humanity that we had a right to expect

<sup>1</sup> "The Case for Belgium." Published for the Belgian Delegates to the United States by the Macmillan Company, 1914.

some trace of in a Germany who sought to impose her Culture on a world—does such justice and such humanity hold a “whole population collectively responsible for the acts of a small number of individuals?”<sup>1</sup>

But we may as well consider even the rules of “civilized” war. “If,” as the Belgian delegates well pointed out, “the son of the burgo-master at Aerschot had been convicted of the killing of the German officer; if some inhabitants of Louvain had really fired upon German troops, the Germans might have had the authors of such acts punished under the law of the conqueror; instead, by taking hostages, by executing innocent men, by disseminating everywhere terror, fire and death, by substituting—as savages do—joint responsibility for individual responsibility, they have dishonored warfare and forever destroyed the guaranties which the law of nations accords to peaceful and non-combatant civilians. If such actions were not held up to universal reproof, then nothing would remain of this International

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

Law, which, for the last half century, civilized peoples have striven for and codified."

Upon that point, the same delegates tellingly quote Bluntschli, a jurist whose word is authoritative:

"The present International Law denies entirely the right to dispose arbitrarily of the fate of individuals, and does not admit of ill-treatment or violence against them. Personal security, honor and liberty are private rights which the laws of war do not permit to be attacked. The enemy may take such steps only as are necessary for military operations or necessary for the safety of the State."

My father used to tell the story of a famous defense at law set up by a woman who was sued for breaking a pitcher that a neighbor had lent her.

This defendant contended:

"1. The pitcher was not broken when I returned it.

"2. The pitcher was broken when lent me.

"3. I never borrowed the pitcher."

That line of defense is closely paralleled by the general defense of Germany's actions in Belgium. It runs:

"1. There were no hardships upon non-combatants for non-combatants to resist.

"2. The non-combatants resisted the hardships that we imposed upon them.

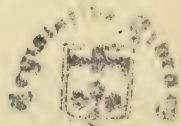
"3. The entire population was in arms: there were no non-combatants."

If one of these statements is true, the remaining two are false. If any is true, the terms of the Hague Convention and Bluntschli's undisputed interpretation of International Law still remain to convict the German Army.

Only two arguments are left, and these are as mutually contradictory as their predecessors. They are that there were perhaps "a few isolated cases of green German soldiers who got out of hand and ran amuck at the start of the war," and that the Belgian testimony of unwarranted outrages, of rape and murder, is a pack of lies. But the German horrors in Belgium cannot be convincingly interpreted as the result of "green soldiers" getting "out of hand": although such cases are indeed common to every war, unavoidable in every war—

although they constitute one of the deep damnations of war itself—here in Belgium we have as the offender an invading army which has in almost every other respect made good its long boast of the utmost in efficiency, of discipline down to the minutest detail; and yet this army commits continuous outrages not only after the opening battles, but throughout three months of warfare. Lies? Some of course there are—even there is some epidemic of lying. But are we to assume that the entire population is infected; that hundreds of voluntary witnesses, unknown to one another and unacquainted with one another's testimony, could corroborate one another by mere coincidence—that, in brief, the whole Belgian race is a race of inspired liars?

Against such a preposterous supposition it is necessary to set nothing. Nevertheless, I set two undenied facts. Nobody that has passed through a looted Belgian town has failed to see chalked on certain rare doors some such phrase as "These people are friendly; do not plunder"; the passing German officers, if



indeed they themselves did not cause it to be written, must either have seen it or been criminally negligent: does it, or does it not, imply that plundering was going on? Remember that chalked phrase, and then remember that it was the great Bismarck himself who said:

“Above all, you must inflict on the inhabitants of invaded towns the maximum of suffering, so that they may become sick of the struggle and may bring pressure to bear upon their government to discontinue it. You must leave the people through whose land you march only their eyes to weep with.”

Read, also, the words of von Bernhardi in “Germany and the Next War” and see how their acid philosophy, quite harmless in intelligent hands, will surely be transmuted in the brutal minded into direct command to slaughter and burn and steal.

Read, last of all, the super-brutal cynicism of Prof. Treitschke, who would improve the human species by extinguishing those he liked least.

When you have pondered these amazing

beliefs of the German philosophers you will no longer have to see pictures of slaughtered Belgian women and children in order to be convinced of the reality. You will know that the philosophy of the German war-mad, in which Almighty God is curiously uncounted, could have produced naught else.

## IV

### AVALANCHE

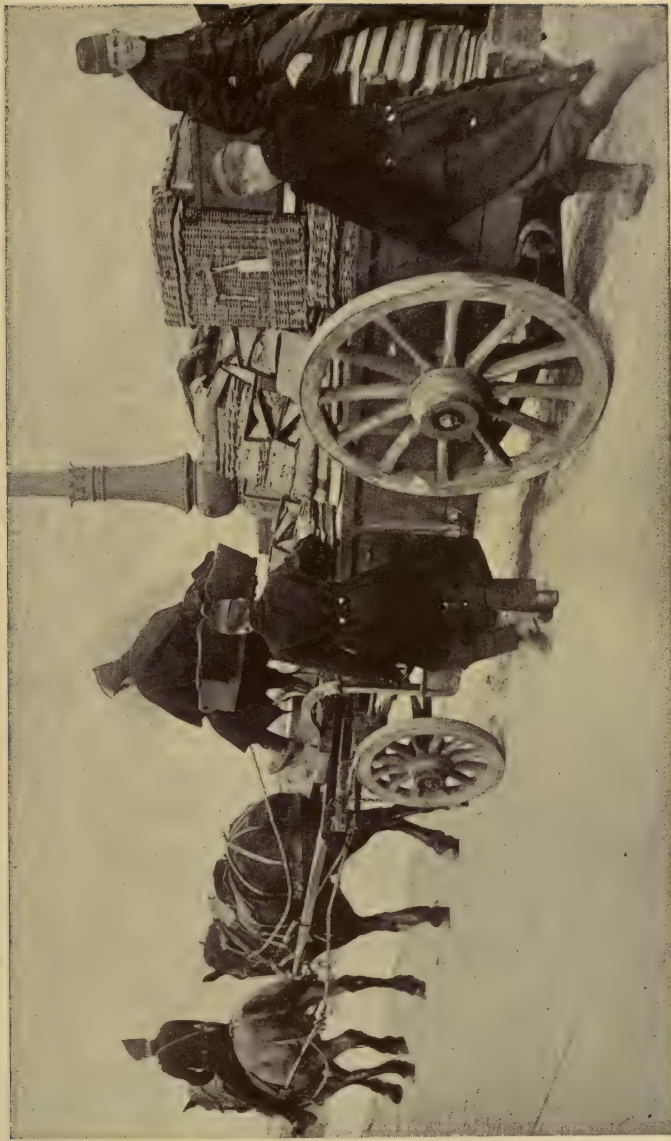
IN the preceding chapter there was frequent reference to the report of the Belgian Delegates to the United States. The body of that report is so full of carefully sifted evidence of rape, murder, torture and wanton destruction that one may well wonder why any writer should now pause to add to it. It would seem, too, that if those delegates left anything unsaid, what they left has been abundantly supplied by the newspapers' war-correspondents and by the authors of several books about the war, who have had far better opportunities for observation and investigation than fell to my lot. My answer is this: I know what has already been done over here for Belgium's suffering non-combatants, and I am proud of my country's present response to their appeal; but, since my return to America, I have found that

a large portion of our public is still withholding its help because it is still unconvinced of the necessity for help. No land is so ready with its charity as is this land, but no land is so level-headed; Americans are generous, but they do not like to have their generosity imposed upon; they will gladly give their last cent available, but the native of every State "comes from Missouri." In view of this, not one piece of evidence concerning the wrongs done in Belgium should be lost; the telling of the slightest instance may bring some new bit of assistance—and every bit is desperately needed.

Realizing, however, that what I saw of German atrocities was, after all, seen with the eyes of an outsider by no means so well furnished with powers to take him about among the scenes of destruction as the accredited correspondents at the front, I shall here concern myself not with such after-evidences as I chanced to observe, but with the testimony given me by eye-witnesses of the actual happenings and by some of the victims themselves.

To repeat every convincing tale that was told me would be to make a book far larger than this book may be; it would be the narrative of some details that may better be left—and can safely be left—to the discriminating imagination of the reader; and it would be to pile horror upon horror until my audience was sated beyond any response to Belgium's needs. My task is, therefore, largely one of selection.

The stories told me, though they for the most part passed the mere inventive powers of their tellers, and though they varied as much in detail as they corresponded in tenor and conviction, were generally characterized by the qualities that I noticed in those told by the early refugees to Ostend. They had a brevity, a bare statement of fact, that conveyed a special sense of horror. When the speakers were of the class that has acquired the gift of verbal picture-making, they were as a rule still too stunned to employ that gift. This, nevertheless, they had to the last man and woman among them—almost to the last child: they had a wonderful, a touching faith in what



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MOVING A GOVERNMENT  
Belgian State Records in Transfer from Belgium to France.



America could and would do for them. One and all, they were possessed by that splendid belief in the greatness and goodness of the Republic beyond the seas. Over and over again—from the lips of the aged, who had seen burnt the little houses and gardens that they had for years labored to maintain; from the tongues of women whose husbands had been shot down in plain view of their helpless wives; out of the mouths of newly-made orphans—I heard the words:

“America is doing so much; it can do so much; it will do so much. When America knows all, we shall be saved. Yours is the great peaceful nation; it is the true Power at The Hague; it will stop these infamies.”

I have not always, I fear, been a very loyal American; but no American could think ill of his country when he realized how these homeless and stricken people of a foreign land believed in the charity and justice of the United States.

Another note was often repeated, especially by those refugees from villages along the

German border where no real fighting had taken place between the hordes of the invader and the little army of Belgium. This was the note of absolute bewilderment at the suddenness of the catastrophe. Even in that country, it reminded me of stories that I have heard Swiss mountaineers tell of avalanches in the Alps:

“We were at work. We were doing nothing wrong. We were at work in our fields, and they made us stop our work.”

There was a man of perhaps seventy years. His face was bandaged. He had worked for a generation as a small farmer, and the soil had called until he bent double toward it.

“In the village north of mine,” he said, “there was a company of our little soldiers; but they were not in our village. Then we did not even know that they were anywhere near. Along the road beside which I was working came some men on bicycles. They passed and presently returned. Then they came back again, and this time with them a great, great

many soldiers on foot—soldiers in gray and wearing helmets: Germans. They called me out of the field. I am old, you observe, and I walk slowly. When I did not come quickly enough to please them, two ran forward and pricked me with their bayonets. You see this cut in my cheek.”

He loosened the bandage. Just below his right cheek-bone an ugly red wound sliced the wrinkled skin.

“There is another wound in my shoulder,” he went on. “When their officer saw these things done, he laughed; but he told his men to be careful, because, he said, I and my fellow-villagers should presently be needed.

“We went on into the village. Out of each field, the Germans gathered all the workers, women as well as men. Also in the village itself. There they put us in front of them—two of our women had babies at the breast. If we lagged, they said, we should be shot, and those of us nearest the soldiers were pricked on by the soldiers’ bayonets. At a turn of the

road, we saw, ahead of us, a line of Belgian infantry, their rifles ready. The German officers said to us:

“‘You will stoop down when we fire, and, when we have fired, you will stand again and march forward with us behind you. If you disobey, we shall kill you where you stand.’”

“We did it—most of us. We had to. We were helpless. One of the women with a baby was perhaps too much afraid; she fell before a shot was fired. An officer nodded, and a soldier put his bayonet through her breast as she lay on the ground. She screeched and died.

“‘Now you see what will happen to you!’—The officers said that.

“They kicked the woman’s body aside, and the body of the crying baby, and we marched on . . . When the firing became general, I pretended to be shot; I fell down and rolled into the ditch beside the road.”

Some instances have been cited in America of the burgomaster and parish priest of one village or another being seized by the enemy

on entering a hamlet and held as hostages. These instances were not rare; they were the custom, a part of the plan of campaign. When the invaders remained overnight in the village, those hostages were kept under guard. If, during the night, a drunken soldier's insult to a villager's wife was resented by her husband—if, an Uhlan having drunk a cottager's wine, tried to seize that cottager's daughter and was struck by her father—then the priest and burgomaster would be marched into the village street, the people called out and the hostages executed. More often the exacted atonement was still more widely vicarious:

“It is with my consent that the Commander-in-Chief has ordered the whole town to be burned and that about one hundred people have been shot. I bring this fact to the knowledge of the city of Liège so that the citizens of Liège may realize the fate with which they are menaced.”

I am far from denying that certain of the hundreds of stories of rape were false. In Antwerp, in the early days of the war, the com-

mon salutation of the professional peripatetic was some such fabrication. But the mere fact that these stories were seized upon as credible by those women is some evidence to the prevalence of outrages upon innocent girls. The Belgian Commission alone has authenticated many cases beyond all shadow of doubt, and to these have been added scores of equally unimpeachable instances gathered by reputable war-correspondents. There are the stories told to nurses in faltering syllables by young girls whose relatives, having been murdered, could not have put the words into their mouths, and whose previous upbringing precluded the theory that they could have learned in any way save that at which they hinted some of the deeds done to them. Not infrequently these deeds were of a sort of which only alienists and madmen have a real knowledge. I know something of the Belgian people, and I know that the details of the stories to which I refer would never have been known by their narrators—in some instances, children of ten and twelve—

had those narrators not been the victims of the crimes that they described.

“. . . So they killed my father and mother,” said a little girl of fifteen: “those four soldiers that came into our house after the servants had run away. They did it because my father was a notary and had papers about, and the Germans said he was a spy spying on them. And then—” She hid her face, but ears and neck were crimson. “And then—You know what I mean, madame,” she sobbed in the nurse’s arms: “those four bad men!”

A Belgian soldier put another case in another manner. His company was passing through a town that the Germans had temporarily evacuated:

“There was a naked old woman hanging from a telegraph-pole. She was quite dead, and there were bayonet-wounds in her breast. But what had happened to her before she was hanged and bayoneted—that was far worse than hanging.”

A small boy, who said that he had been the

errand-boy at the shop of a wine-merchant in Huy, told me this:

“The German soldiers came to our shop and demanded wine. My master gave it and, when they had drunk, asked payment. Just then a German lieutenant came in the door and heard my master. The lieutenant said: ‘We have conquered your country; conquerors do not pay, they take.’ He took a bottle himself, knocked the head off it and drank. The ragged glass cut his lips, and this made him angry. He took another bottle and knocked my master down with it. He told the soldiers to take all they wanted, and he must have told other soldiers when he went out into the street, for some more came in. They drank all they could and then broke bottles and smashed casks and poured the wine on the floor. They looted the cellars. Then they went out and set fire to all the houses in two streets. That was toward the end of August. . . .”

“When I ran away from my village on the Ghent-road”—it is a woman of thirty that is speaking now, and she carries a five-years-old

boy swathed in bloody bandages over wounds caused by flying particles of flying shell—"all the people left alive in the village ran with me, for the Germans had told us that they would burn the place and that all remaining would be shot. When we were quite exhausted, we came to a shrine by the road, and our curé, who was with us, stopped us there to pray. We knelt in the road, monsieur, and we prayed for our country. We prayed also for our dear dead, and our husbands who were at the war, and we prayed that the Blessed Virgin would intercede for us—since surely we must have done some grave wrong to be so punished, though what it was we do not know—and that, now our little houses were gone, we might be given some work—oh, any sort of honest work—to do in order to feed our little ones. And even while we were praying, some of those Germans, having followed us on horseback from our village, rode up and said we had committed a crime to stop when they had told us to go on. And so they took five of the old men and stood them in the road and shot them. One was my

father. They did not let us stay to bury my father."

That desire to work is another characteristic of your Belgian. Since returning to America, I have heard a few cynics, who knew nothing of the people of Belgium, say that most of the refugees had become so used to charity as to want to live on it for the rest of their lives. Anybody at all acquainted with the Belgian character is aware that a scorn of idleness, a love of thrift and a pride in his work is inculcated in the Belgian. These are national traits. Nothing else could have made Belgium the wealthy country that it was until August, 1914. Among a nation made homeless, there must inevitably be found a few shirkers; but I venture to say that you could never find fewer anywhere than can be found among these suddenly dispossessed Belgians. Nearly all, they are willing to undertake any task—the once richest of them—however menial it may be. They want only justice for their country and work for themselves. This woman whose father

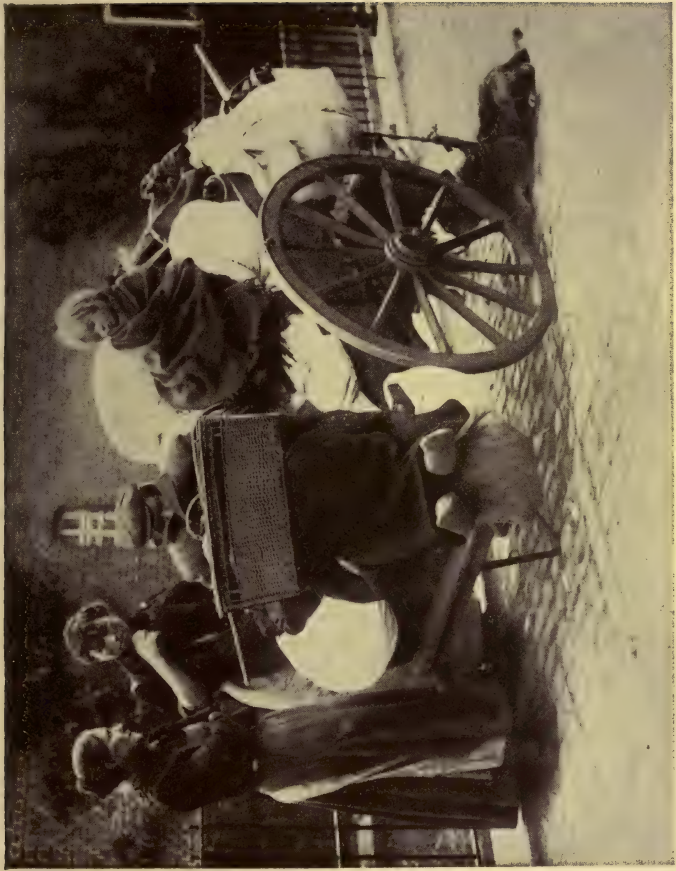
had been shot down at his prayers put it truly: "Any sort of honest work in order to feed our little ones."

How many unoffending fugitives were massacred in their endeavors to escape will, of course, never be known. One old farmer told me of crossing a small stream that was clogged by the bodies of such refugees. "I saw them heaped there," he said with a dramatic sense unusual in his fellows: "The water had climbed up behind them and was just trickling over the top of the pile. Perhaps they were better so: what are we that are alive to find to live by?" Nothing, it would certainly seem, remains to them. What they had, in their own land, amassed by years of slow toil and painful denial has vanished. Such strength as was left them was often sapped by the shock of their losses, by the sights confronting them, by terrible journeys through flooded fields under pelting rain, by wounds, illness, starvation. In their native-land are the Germans; the hands of France are full; in willing, but sadly tried Eng-

land and in America, they have added to all these disadvantages the disadvantage of an alien tongue. . . .

The complete destitution of the dispossessed is a tribute to the vaunted thoroughness of the race whose national hero admonished it to leave its enemies "only their eyes to weep with." Many a refugee has told me incidents abundantly bearing out those of the "fire-blackened houses" where Mr. Powell saw hanging "white flags made from sheets and table-cloths and pillow-cases—pathetic appeals for the mercy which was not granted"; not a few have confirmed the same author's statement that at Aerschot and Louvain the Germans "broke the windows of houses and threw in sticks which had been soaked in oil and dipped in sulphur," and that at Termonde, evacuated by the inhabitants before the enemy entered it, "they used a motor-car equipped with a large tank for petrol, a pump, a hose and a spraying-nozzle."<sup>1</sup> I have been shown some of the small rings of guncotton, about an inch in diameter, such as

<sup>1</sup> "Fighting in Flanders." Charles Scribner's Sons.



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HOMELESS

Three Generations of One Family Dispossessed by the War.



were used at Termonde, carried in bagsful by the German troops and, when ignited, spreading fire by a series of leaps actuated by their own explosion. Where the invader destroyed, he destroyed utterly.

I was lucky enough to talk to several fugitives from Liège, Louvain, Dinant, Malines and Aerschot. Said a citizen of the first-named of these, a man of wealth and education:

“We had been warned what would happen if we citizens offered armed resistance, but when the blow fell, it fell with only a few of us, if any, knowing that such futile resistance or reprisal had been attempted. For my part, I have yet to learn of any. The Germans fired the rue des Pitteurs, the Place de l’Université and the Quai des Pecheurs without so much as telling the sleeping inhabitants what it was proposed to do. It was only the choking smoke that wakened me and my family. Our house was in flames. Of course we ran out of it. The German troops in the street fired on us as we came out, wounding my daughter. In the same manner fifteen persons were killed.

Later I saw a group of German soldiers flinging about a young girl in the open street of a suburb. I protested. They told me that they meant to kill her, and my entreaties for her life merely got me a blow with a rifle-butt that knocked me down. As I lay there, I saw them bayonet the girl. I know of no reason for this outrage, and I am sure that the victim knew of none. A seven-years-old boy was playing with a toy-musket—one of those children's toys that shoot a stick for five yards and would not hurt a baby: a passing soldier shot the little fellow, declaring that the lad had pointed the gun at him." . . .

"There is no manner of doubt," said a merchant of Louvain, "that in my city the alleged firing of non-combatants upon German troops was, in reality, German soldiers firing on a party of their comrades whom they mistook for a Belgian force. I knew it because I saw it. So did many others. Our Government has now the full evidence. Certainly the Germans themselves knew it; they spoke of it about the town. But either because their error angered

them against the whole world, or because they wanted a pretext for destruction, they soon charged the shooting to the citizens, and the massacre and burning followed.”. . .

“The Germans say that there were Belgian troops in our town when it was bombarded and its historic monuments destroyed,” a Malines physician said to me. “That is not true. I had just made a tour of the town, and I know that what I say is the fact. More than that, the Germans knew it. German officers subsequently admitted it in my hearing; but they said that the bombardment was necessary for ‘its moral effect.’ ”

The case of once beautiful Dinant is thus stated by Victor Yseux, a barrister, a Doctor of Laws and a former president of the Belgian Bar Association:

“On the 21st of August, at about 9 o'clock in the evening, German troops came into Dinant down the road from Ciney and entered Dinant by the Rue St. Jacques. No sooner were they in the town than they began firing into the windows of the houses. They killed a work-

man who was returning to his own house and wounded another inhabitant, forcing him to cry 'Long live the Kaiser!' They bayoneted a third in the abdomen. Swaggering into the cafés, they seized the liquor, got drunk and, going out, set fire to several houses.

"At 6:30 A. M. of the next Sunday, German soldiers of the One Hundred and Eighth Regiment of Infantry invaded the Church of the Premonstratensian Fathers, ordered the congregation to leave, separated the men from the women, and shot fifty of the former. About an hour later, the Germans unreservedly gave themselves up to pillage and arson. They went from house to house, driving the inhabitants into the street, then pillaging and firing the dwellings. Such inhabitants as tried to escape their insults were shot. About nine in the morning, the soldiery, driving before them by blows from the butt-ends of rifles men, women and children, pushed them all into the public square, where they were kept prisoners for nine hours while their houses were being burnt and robbed. When the women asked what was to

be done with them, the guard answered that they were to be shot.

“At last, a Captain separated the men from the women and children. The women were placed in front of a rank of infantry soldiers, the men were then ranged along a wall. The front rank of them was ordered to kneel. A platoon of soldiers drew up. The women cried for mercy on their husbands, sons and brothers, but the officer ordered his men to fire. There had been no inquiry and no pretense of trial. Perhaps twenty of the inhabitants were only wounded, but fell among the dead. The soldiers fired a new volley into the heap of them. Several citizens escaped this double discharge, shamming dead for more than two hours, remaining motionless among the corpses, and, when night fell, escaped to the hills. Eighty-four dead were left on the square.”

That was not the only massacre at Dinant. A party of German soldiers found some citizens in the cellars of a brewery in the Faubourg St. Pierre and shot them. On another occasion, workmen employed by a M. Himmer hid them-

selves, their wives and children in the cellar of their employer's factory. Forced by hunger, they at last came out, carrying a white flag. Every man was instantly shot. "Nearly all the men in the Faubourg de Neffe were executed en masse," Dr. Yseux continues, "and in another quarter a dozen were slaughtered in a cellar. An old woman and all of her children were killed in their cellar. A man of sixty-five, his wife, his son and his daughter were shot against a wall. Other inhabitants were taken in a barge as far as the rock of Bayard and shot there, among them a woman eighty-three years old.

"A group of men and women had been locked in the court of the prison. A German machine gun, placed on the hill above, opened fire on them, and an old woman and three other persons were brought down. Meanwhile, soldiers not engaged in the killing sacked the houses of the town, after which they set fire to it.

"Before the Germans came there, Dinant had fourteen hundred houses; it now has only two

hundred. Its factories have been practically obliterated. At least seven hundred of its inhabitants have been killed; others have been taken to Germany and are there held prisoners; the majority are refugees; a few who remained in the town are dying from hunger.”<sup>1</sup>

Three accounts have been given of the cause of the Aerschot massacre. The Belgians have one; the Germans two and each of those two contradicts the other. Nobody denies that Josef Hielemans, the burgomaster, a brewer and miller with a reputation for mildness and docility, had issued many proclamations and circulars commanding the townsfolk to placate the invaders. Nobody denies that he asked the German Chief of Staff and some of his officers to dine at the Hielemans house. The one German story says that the citizens rose and attacked their conquerors in disregard of these friendly advances on the part of their burgomaster; the other says that M. Hielemans' son shot his father's guest of honor at table and that the subsequent massacre was by way of

<sup>1</sup> Substantially, this same account was published by Dr. Yseux in the *New York Times* for January 24, 1915.

reprisal: *the alleged murderer was fifteen years old*. The Belgian story, as I heard it, is that the slaughter was started by the killing of a German officer in the Grande Place, who was hit by a stray bullet from one of the guns of some German troops engaged in "shooting up the town," like a pack of desperadoes in our own long past Wild West, with a view to terrifying the inhabitants. If you admit one German version, you give the lie to the other; if you accept the Belgian, you have an account that conforms to the proved action of German troops in a score of other Belgian towns and villages.

To the many stories of the massacrē, I shall add but one. It was told in England by a slim, dark woman, whose splendid eyes and drawn face made more eloquently clear than her words the infamies that she had looked upon. Mme. von de Pol fled to England with her three children, of whom the oldest is scarcely eleven years of age. She herself is still in her early thirties. She speaks German, French, Flemish and English. Gently reared,

she still bears the tokens of her upbringing. She spoke coherently and in the voice of cultivation. Her gestures were few; her voice was low and even.

"I was," she said, "the wife of a leather merchant. We were prosperous and happy in a pleasant home. That was until the morning of the nineteenth of August. Now it is over. My husband I have not seen since the Germans occupied Aershot.

"On that morning the town was bombarded for nearly an hour and a half from nine o'clock, houses crumbling to dust about our own. Then the Germans entered. They behaved like beasts. They dragged the inhabitants, who hid in their cellars, out into the streets and shut hundreds of them into the church as prisoners. It was then that my husband disappeared.

"I had sent, thank God, my children a few miles away to Ryckevorsel. For myself, I escaped death because I spoke German and pretended not to be afraid, although how I achieved that deception I do not know, for to

me it seemed that I never ceased to tremble. While seeing many of my neighbors shot in the streets, I managed to say that I was a German, and the soldiers at last chalked on the door of my house the words:

“‘A German lady, living alone. Save this place unconditionally.’

“You say that the Germans declare their actions to have been the result of shooting on the part of the inhabitants on the evening after the German occupation began. That declaration cannot be true, because the Germans began their butchery and devastation as soon as they had arrived. They battered their way into the cellars where the frightened people were hiding and brought them out at the bayonet’s point: I saw them. They outraged women and girls, they burned, stole, killed. M. Hielemans’ warehouse held food enough to feed the town for two years: they shipped it to Germany. My husband’s warehouse they stripped clean.

“House after house they burned. In some of these I know that there were people ill and

unable to leave. My milkmaid they murdered; they shot dead a recently married couple, my neighbors. Nearby, they shot first a husband, then his wife, then her baby. They even seemed to think that they were merciful, because they said: 'We do not torture; we kill outright.'

"On the evening of the nineteenth, as I know of my own knowledge, a great body of the people of the town were taken to an open field and tossed down there, their arms bound behind them. After they had been left thus all night long, one in every three of these peaceful folk was called to stand out and was shot, while their friends and relatives were forced to witness the massacre. A hundred and sixty-nine were killed. Those who were left were kicked and beaten out of the town.

"I remained in Aerschot after the Belgians retook it and until it was once more taken by the Germans. Then the Germans were worse than they had been at first. Before his wife's eyes they shot the railroad-station-master; near his house they killed a woman and her

three months' old baby. I know a man, once a prosperous printer, who was compelled to look on while one of his sons was shot and while the arm of another was cut off in such a manner that he died of the wound. I have heard, on the best authority, that several of our priests were murdered.

"What we few survivors went through, I cannot tell you. For two entire weeks we scarcely slept, and never once during that time did we dare to take our clothes off, or go to bed in the ordinary manner."

She paused. She put her slim, dark hand to her forehead: it was almost the only gesture that she had employed.

"Those things which I remember," she said, "I shall never be able to forget. But much I have forgotten. It was too terrible to remember. I am not sorry that I have forgotten it."

Mme. von de Pol was not the only Belgian that talked of the murder of babies and young children. I heard of many such atrocities, along with stories of Germans firing on the white flag and on the Red Cross, as well as two

or three of their use of these and the Belgian banner for luring detachments of the Belgians into their clutches. Here, however, I shall tell but one, and that because it comes from an American. His name I am permitted only to indicate, because his wife is still suffering from the shock of the experience and further publicity would only aggravate that shock. I shall therefore call him "Mr. S——" and merely add that he is a man well known and a member of a prominent New England family.

Mr. S—— and his wife had been motoring on the Continent and, the war having started, were making through Belgium for the coast. They had, as they supposed, all the papers necessary for their protection. While still inside the German lines in the invaded country, they passed a ruined village and overtook a boy and a girl, aged about nine and five years. The children, weeping, said that their parents had been killed and that they had fallen hopelessly behind the column of refugees hurrying from their village. They had no knowledge of the

whereabouts of any of their relatives or friends; they were hungry and penniless. Mr. and Mrs. S—— took these waifs into their car. At first their only thought was to deliver the children to the Belgian authorities in some safe town; but soon the hapless condition of the little fugitives, and their simple and appealing manner, completely won the Americans' hearts: they must be taken to their rescuers' own New England home and there kept, perhaps until, the war over, some relative should be discovered, or, failing such discovery, for the remainder of their lives.

No such outcome was to be. A few miles along the road, a squad of German soldiers stopped the car. They found the Americans' papers in order—but what about the children?

Mr. S—— explained.

"They must get out of the car," said the soldier in command.

The children got out.

"They cannot go with you," said the officer.

Mr. S—— protested. His wife pleaded. The soldier became angry; he ordered the

children shot. The sentence was immediately executed.

For my part, I do not consider those children the most unhappy of the Belgians. I do not consider the most unhappy of the Belgians the murdered women and old men, who died amid the smoking ruins of their houses. The most unhappy of the Belgians are the survivors of this Teutonic avalanche: the wife of the once rich merchant, the widow of the once contented cottager, the homeless old men and women, the children and babies left alone in a ravished country, the legions that have been driven resourceless into alien lands, the non-combatant thousands who are starving in that land of their own where, but a few months since, they lived in peace and plenty. . . .

What of them?

## V.

### THE RED RAIN IN ANTWERP

THERE will be small order in this chapter, and but little form, because what I have here to describe is an end of order; it is that enemy of form: chaos. Elsewhere I have called refugee-flooded Ostend the Back-Door of Hell; but even when I left Ostend I did not really believe in Hell.—I believe in it now; I have been there. . . .

At first, after I entered Antwerp, there was only one hint of approaching disaster: a distant muttering from the south, as I have heard thunder-storms mutter over their brewing wrath across Yorkshire moors. Ceaselessly, regularly, stubbornly, that far rumble proceeded, now and again breaking into a single sharp report, or rising to a piercing scream. Away down there, clouds of smoke beat the still October air. Then the reports, the

screams, would cease; but always the obligato of those tremendous basses continued.

In the heart of the city, everything was still. There was a quiet, oppressive, but orderly. The streets were almost empty, and the shops were closed. One store alone, it seemed, was open for business, displaying placards from the hands of an amateur sign-painter, which announced "bargains in cellar-beds"; that is to say, beds constructed for use in the shallow Antwerp cellars, where the inhabitants might hide from the expected shell-fire. But otherwise the house fronts were rows of tombs; they reminded one of a walk through Père Lachaise: the doors barred, the shutters bolted; and it was strange to pass along these death-like thoroughfares and see, fluttering from a thousand sealed fronts, the gay flag of Belgium.

That was not the only flag in view: all the historic and public buildings flew the banner of the Hague Convention, in order to warn the poisoning enemy of spots where even his shells might not fall with impunity. This, at a stiller

air-level, hung limply; however, above the hôtel de ville and trembled, as if asking for mercy, over the fourteenth-century Gothic cathedral, the jewel of the Low Countries, around which circled a pair of silent and watchful Belgian aëroplanes.

Every little while, a Boy Scout, his sombrero pulled over his nose, his green cape flying, would dart around a corner, on government service, as most Belgian Boy Scouts were—a messenger, perhaps, from the school-building in the Avenue du Commerce, which, after the flight from Brussels, had become the nation's Foreign Bureau; a dispatch-bearer from the Ministry of State, then quartered in the Hotel St. Antoine, or a miniature legate from one of the offices that had taken refuge in the Grand Hotel. Once there passed a shovel-hatted priest in swirling cassock, the Red Cross blazing on his arm and about his neck a necklace of rolls suspended, bound for the firing-line. In the distance, a dog-battery crossed the street's end, and twice motor-cars from the Parc des Automobiles Militaires at the steam-

ship docks shot across the way: when war was declared, the army immediately commandeered every automobile obtainable, wiping all speed-laws from the statute-slate, and now the military machines dashed along city-thoroughfares as I have never seen cars dash save in the quest of that modern grail, the Vanderbilt Cup.

My course lay through what is usually the busiest portion of the city and along the Avenue de Keyser and the Place de Meir. In the former street, at other times so merry with its pavement-café, there was scarcely anybody to be seen. In the long mile which, through happier times, had been to Antwerp what the Strand is to London, the Municipal Banqueting Hall was now as dark as a prison; the Théâtre des Variétés, where I had sat through the merriest of French comedies, was become a closed barn; the sole sign of life was the sentry pacing up and down before the palace.

The last fortress of a nation, Antwerp, until a few months since a thoroughly modern city of four hundred thousand inhabitants, had returned to its mediæval order without its me-

diæval grandeur. Its southern suburbs had been obliterated to make place for miles upon miles of trenches, pits, barbed-wire entanglements. Its richest citizens and its most prosperous tradesmen had become paupers. Under martial-law, its cafés were all but closed; since the Zeppelin attack in August, its electric-lighting system had been out of commission, and all other illumination was shut off nightly at eight o'clock, when the street-cars ceased running. Letters addressed to any country save France, Russia or England had to be posted unsealed; scarcely any personal telegrams could leave or enter; the telephone could be used only for governmental or military purposes. All sale of spirits was forbidden. Now, a German shell having destroyed the municipal water-plant at Lierre, water was a luxury.

Yet this city was once the busiest in the world, surpassing even Venice and Genoa: in the days when Antwerp sent the largest ships over all the Seven Seas, and Antwerp's fair was the greatest of all earth's markets, Flem-



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ANTWERP

"It was hard to believe her doomed, . . . this home of de Vos and Quinten Matsys, of both the Teniers, and Van Dyck."



ish rugs were sold in Persia and Flemish prayer-mats to the Turk. It was hard to believe her doomed at last, this home of de Vos and Quinten Matsys, of Seghers, Jordaens, both the Teniers and Van Dyck. Just around that deserted corner remained the house in which Rubens lived and died. Godfrey de Bouillon had been margrave here; this stronghold had suffered eight sieges; the Northmen burnt it; the still-remembered *Furie Espagnole* swept across its walls; Alexander of Parma for fourteen months invested it; Carnot tried to hold it in the War of Liberation; the Dutch bombarded it during the revolution of 1830, and the French in 1832; Brialmont, in the middle eighteenth-hundreds, made it "the best fortification in Europe."

Hard indeed to believe it was doomed at last: too hard for many an inhabitant, who was soon to pay heavily for his inability to doubt those engineering feats of Brialmont. Until the last two days of the siege, belief would not waver. Outside, their ranks decimated by a rain of explosives from guns beyond range

of all reply, the little Belgian army lay face to face with death; its men had fought for days without resting; many of them had been hurried from Liège and Malines and brought by boat to Antwerp; the ambulance-service was crippled; the field-hospitals overflowed; the dead were unburied. Nevertheless, the citizens of Antwerp, inside its walls, continued firm. Had not all the military-experts in the world pronounced their town impregnable? Up to the morning of that fatal Wednesday, the population believed in their fortifications as truly as the passengers on the *Titanic* believed in the security of their ice-shattered steamer.

The new turn of opinion was first voiced by that mighty gossip, the man at whose house I was to stop.

"The end is sure soon to arrive," he declared. "Von Besler, one of the German generals, sent word of it to-day. He told the neutral ministers to bid us be ready, and Deguise, our Military Commandant, warned all to go who feared to die. Thousands"—he nodded over his shoulder—"are streaming out of the

city now: *that* part of the town is not quiet, I assure you."

"And how do the rest of the people think it will end?"

He shook his head:

"The Communal Council has unanimously voted that we resist till the last day. But this *is* the end. The Allies? Poof! It seems that they have their hands full over the border, those allies. To-night will witness well the start of the termination."

He was as certain of it as I was. This morning, he had heard, the Germans had put into position their tremendous forty-two centimeter guns, the mere appearance of which had brought about the capitulation of Maubeuge. Both of us momentarily expected to hear them: we were destined not to hear them until Thursday night.

"Last evening," chattered my host, "shells wrecked a church in the outskirts, and one shell descended in the rue Volk. People said that the wild beasts in the Zoölogical Gardens had escaped their broken cages. That was false,

but this afternoon the attendants were killing the lions and tigers. To-night the enemy begin in earnest. My faith, if they chose, they could reach us now!"

He was full of this sort of gossip: Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, brother-in-law to the Belgian Queen, was with the besiegers; the Americans' efforts to save the cathedral would be futile, for though the Germans had been given a map with Antwerp's public buildings plainly marked, they had said that they had a right to direct their fire especially against such places in order to terrify the population into demanding a surrender.

"It is allowed by international law," he said.

Small bodies of troops were now almost the only people to be seen moving through the streets, and there passed us, with heads erect and faces set, a company of infantry of which the oldest soldier could not have been more than nineteen: the last scrapings of the military net, these boys that had never yet placed finger to trigger must be tossed before that onrush of German veterans.

A covered wagon rattled by, going in the opposite direction. From a careless corner two pairs of bare feet extended, still upward pointing, jolting horribly with every jolt of the vehicle.


"Dead from a military hospital," said my friend.

"But the feet—why are they bare?"

He shrugged.

"That is the order; it is necessary. Boots are valuable; the living need them, and the dead do not walk."

Above, a long, graceful arc of pale smoke, the track of a shell, was lazily dispersing, and southward soared a black observation Taube, the petrel that foretells the storm. What could that airman be thinking of the little people below him as, a destroying angel hesitant, he gazed down on the city that from his elevation must have seemed a gigantic chessboard on which the pawns had gone mad: a medley of beautiful but tiny buildings and delicate spires and, under the shadow of those nearest the avenues of escape, columns of whirling dust—



animated dust, stricken human beings, scrambling for their lives along the few outlets beneath a smiling sky.

Something of that scramble I saw later in the afternoon. It was the spectacle that I had seen before at Ostend, but on a larger scale. I had heard from Amsterdam that half a million fugitive Belgian non-combatants were already in Holland, and that every Dutch train from the frontier was groaning under more. I had been told that the forty miles of road to Ghent were already packed with refugees. I knew that all the boats for England were overladen and that—the west Belgian railways, like the entire Belgian telegraph-system, having at last been preëmpted for military uses—all the highways were filling with the fleeing throng. “From our towers,” said an old sacristan of the cathedral, “every smallest path out of the city and away from the Germans looks as if it were a great black snake wriggling forward.” Antwerp, I was informed, had already sent twenty-five thousand of its own citizens to Rosendaal, or through it, and

now this outpouring, beginning at dawn and recalling the pictures of the flights of Tartar tribes, continued without abatement. Into that falling "strongest fortress of Europe" had streamed for shelter the entire surviving population of its outlying towns and countryside; out of it these again were streaming, these and, as it seemed, the rest of the people of Antwerp itself: six hundred thousand souls.

Once, long ago, I sat high on a tree-limb near the edge of a Colorado forest and saw, passing under me, the creatures of the primæval woods running away from a forest-fire. All the native animosities of the bush were forgotten; all the differences of genus and species, the natural antipathies, the ages-old feuds, the primordial blood-lusts were lost sight of; the beast of prey trotted harmless beside its traditional victim; every instinct of contention was submerged in the instinct of flight from an elemental foe. What I saw on this afternoon in Antwerp as much resembled that in kind as it was greater in numbers and degree.

Most of the fugitives sought escape by

water, and the multitudes jammed and dammed every street leading to the quays, every crooked alley that ran toward the north and west. The river resembled a Chinese city's water-front on the festival-day of an Oriental river-god; it was dark with all conceivable sorts of craft, each laden far beyond the danger-point with little children and frail women, with the crippled and the old; the boats of a hundred descriptions bumped and collided; it would have been possible to walk miles about the river's surface dry-shod.

Many of the very rich had long ago fled from their villas at Eeckeren and Cappellen in their motor-cars, returning the cars for government-uses from the border. Now, in the city proper, porters there were none, and cabs were so rare as to fetch, at sale, the prices of Amsterdam's best diamonds; so that one saw well-to-do heads of families staggering under the weight of trunks, their wives limping along with heavy satchels in their hands, and their children dragging bulged canvas-bags through the dirt. Often these people begged a lift in the

ramshackle cart of some farmer escaping from a burning village. Social distinctions were trampled under foot, and the distinctions of mere wealth had practically ceased to exist. There were a few lucky people in carriages, more in what had once been the delivery-wagons of their thriving shops; some were mounted on mules, on horses, on bicycles.

The poorer folk proceeded with push-carts before them, in much the manner in which the Mormons crossed our American prairies, the carts heaped high with a jumble of household goods and sometimes a baby or two tied on top. A lame boy was trundling his paralytic mother in an invalid's chair, and there was a scattering of perambulators loaded, until their springs cracked, with any freight save that for which they were intended. I saw a group of women draw itself from the mass and surround and screen another woman, fallen to the ground: a new life was coming into the world among these thousands fleeing for their lives—subsequently, I heard of sixteen similar instances occurring that day among the tremendous

crowds that trudged along the road to the Dutch frontier. There was but little jostling, and I noticed no fighting; but the men swore, the women sobbed, the children whimpered, and all the while, from the black south, there came the stubborn rumble of that malign thunderstorm, ever seeming to press closer and closer, ever threatening to break over the laggards among the runaways' crippled rear-guard.

I heard a barefoot woman of the fields asking in French for a few centimes from an old man in a frock-coat and silk-hat, who was being driven in an open carriage at the snail's pace made necessary by the congestion of the street.

"I have only the clothes on my back," he answered. "I lost my all when my house and factory were burned at Dinant. To-day I have given this driver all the money that I have left in the world to drive me to the frontier."

The driver confirmed this by a stolid nod. He gave the woman a franc.

Night had fallen by the time I returned to the house: a cold night, but clear and full of stars

of which the pale radiance would every little while be dimmed by the penetrating searchlights from the river-forts as they flashed their dancing shafts across the darkened city.

"I think," said I, "that I shall go to bed early."

My host regarded me as if I were not quite sane.

"Go to bed?" he repeated. "Then you will be the only sound human being in Antwerp that does."

I have no doubt but that he was almost literally correct, yet I held to my purpose. There was not any bravado about it: I had had no sleep on my way here, and, had he clapped a pistol to my head, I should nevertheless have speedily been nodding. So I made him amazedly show me my way upstairs, where I kicked off my boots, lay down in a fourposter and, wrapped in my own blanket, was soon unconscious.

Soon, but not long. In spite of my utter weariness, my sleep became fitful. Once a searchlight's ray flashed blueely in at the window and across my face and wakened me.

Then a dog howled, whom, shortly, a veritable chorus echoed. It seemed that this had scarcely at length subsided before there came, not localized, but as if from over the entire city, a great panting breath, regularly drawn, as of some wounded monster of the earliest world. I remembered Zola's account of Sedan on the eve of "La Débâcle." Out of the streets there rose mingled sounds and muffled, sounds incomplete, mournful: the trot of distant cavalry, the roll of drums, the tramp of marching men, and, far away, the muttering of the approaching storm. . . .

A loud explosion wakened me. I jumped out of bed while the glass from the window tinkled at my feet. Another explosion followed as I was drawing on my boots, and, I think, a third. In that moment, the sound of my host, beating with both fists on my bedroom door, was scarcely louder than the crackling of logs on a hearth.

"The Zeppelins!" he gasped as I admitted him. "Again the Zeppelins!"

There may or may not have been Zeppelins: my informant, at any rate, declared that he had heard four bombs from them. They had passed close at hand, just over the southern portion of the city. One thing was certain: here, in whatever manner, was what he had called "the start of the termination."

We ran downstairs: it were more correct to say that we fell down. As a heavier man, I fell the faster and, on landing, began to fumble with the knob of the street-door.

"Not that way! Not that way!" called my host. "Have you indeed lost your senses? That door leads to the open air."

"I know it," I said. "I—"

"But the cellar—it is to the cellar that we must go! There alone is any portion of protection."

Several men that ought to know—among them, Mr. Guy Whitlock, who is a lieutenant in the navy and understands more about shell-fire than I hope ever to master—have since told me that, in a long-continued bombardment, they would prefer, for its chances of safety,

an open park to the cellar of a house, and, in most of the cases that I have met with, impulse backs this no doubt reasoned decision. To flee to the cellars at the first sign of a real bombardment had, however, been the advice beaten into every non-combatant's head by the mallet of Belgian authority since the war began, and, now that this advice was recalled to me, it assumed complete possession of my mind. Moreover, I confess without shame that my uppermost impulse now immediately became one to creep as deep into the earth as I could go—an impulse that returned more than once during that night and the day that followed it. But I reflected that, if all prognostications were true, I was probably in for a part of the heaviest bombardment that any city has ever known since cannon were invented, and that to go belowstairs would be to miss seeing a bit of something that no man had ever seen before. I certainly was afraid to go into the street—very badly afraid indeed—but, I argued with myself, and aloud to my companion, that we should really be safer there than under a house

the whole weight of which might at any instant be precipitated upon us.

He was not convinced. He had seen more of bombardments than I had, and his experience inclined him to the opinion opposed to that which I later heard Mr. Whitlock express.

"You forget the bits of shell and the flying pieces of tile and chimney," he warned me.

Nevertheless I converted myself; and he, though by no means converted, would not let me fare forth alone. Besides, he said, he was "of a curiosity notorious": he would go out with me.

I offered him the second of my automatics.

He refused it.

"To what use?" he sufficiently demanded.

"To shoot the sky?"

He flung wide the door.

Over the black housetops on our right, in the direction of the Avenue de l'Industrie, a crown of flames was rising into the air: the Palais de Justice, we were later told, struck by one of the bombs. In the southwest, another glow, wavering, but far broader, came, as we learned,

from the petroleum tanks at Hoboken. We were standing in a wild uncertainty when two more explosions resounded, one close upon the other and both from the south. Then, with a mounting shriek, a shell burst over that portion of the town. The noise seemed to shatter all that remained of the rightful silence of night. Another shriek followed and another. They were the opening notes of the great bombardment.

I remember looking at my watch by the light of my electric-torch. Something had happened to it; it was going at an amazing rate; but it showed exactly thirty-six minutes after eleven.<sup>1</sup>

In many parts of the city, perhaps in most of it, the remaining population heeded the official advice and fled to their cellars—already

<sup>1</sup> I am precise about this, because I have since heard that there is considerable difference of opinion as to the hour at which the bombardment started. Mr. Powell, who is far and away the most trustworthy authority and seems to have kept his head throughout all the horrors of Antwerp's fall, sets the time as "about ten p. m." The German official reports, on the other hand, set it at midnight. My watch was a wrist-watch, and I had taken it off when I lay down. On jumping out of bed, I knocked it from pillow to floor, and it had subsequently to be thoroughly repaired. Some time it certainly gained on that night before I thought to consult it; but even this did not bring it up to the German calculation.

fitted out, with food and bedding, against such a contingency—and there stayed until the end of the bombardment, or until such time as they joined the last rush of those who escaped from Antwerp before the Germans entered. At a later hour, I passed through streets after streets that were like those of a formerly devastated town enduring a second devastation after its people were dead and buried. Again, I saw, on that night as well as during its successor, crowds run out of their cellars and make for the free exits from the city; once, during a lull in the firing, I heard the rattle of their running feet in the thoroughfare next me, while that in which I stood was empty. But at this first moment, and in the part of Antwerp in which I then was, those streets which had been so deserted by day were filled with darting figures: anxious men and frightened women following that instinct of civilization which, at whatever inconvenience, even through whatever dangers, impels one toward a fire. The police did not interfere, nor did any sentries; nobody hindered us, save as we blindly hin-

dered one another. On all lips were the same questions:

“Where is it?—Were there Zeppelins?—How many?—What was hit?—Has the bombardment begun?”

And, equally ignorant though they were, all answered with haphazard conviction: it was the Ecole Normale, the Synagogue on the Avenue du Sud, and the Institut de Commerce; there had been a score of Zeppelins; shells had fallen on the Engineers' Barracks; now they were coming farther and farther into the city; three had exploded close by the United States Consulate; one had torn the façade from the Hospital for the Aged; the bombardment had been going on for an hour!

That state of mind was to be expected; it was the fruit of existing conditions. All the separate trifles which composed the mosaic of these people's accustomed existence had been plucked from their pattern; a few days ago the whole order of their life had suddenly stopped. There were no street-cars, no electric-lights, no telephones, telegraphs, postal-arrangements,

banks; there was no work, no play and no communication with the outside world. Men, women and children, they now found themselves shut in a dead city with a volcano vomiting overhead.

On a run, bumping, stumbling over unseen impediments into unguessed gutters, my friend and I forged our jostling way toward the nearest glow. It grew brighter with every second, and with every second the shrieks of the shells increased, redoubling their numbers and intensity, until they seemed to be tearing out our brains.

We crossed the Avenue du Sud: flames were indeed coming from a building that must have been the law-courts. Ahead of us, in the rue des Peintres, other flames, but as yet fainter, were licking at the Musée Royal that houses the best collection of Old Masters in the Low Countries. I found myself laughing hysterically:

“In a room on the ground-floor over there”—I pointed—“I remember a statue by Chattrousse called ‘Fellow-feeling’: it’s the statue of

a French soldier and a German soldier turned friends!"

We passed on. We passed a house that somebody said had been struck by one of the Zeppelin bombs: the top floors had been ground to dust and poured through those beneath them.

At the next corner we were knocked down by a rush of people coming from the opposite direction, running away from the shots that had already destroyed their homes. Some one—in that rush I could not make out whether he was a gendarme or a member of the Garde Civique—hurried by.

"To the cellars!" he shouted. "Get into the cellars!"

A few of us may have heeded him; the majority ran on. I saw him overturned by the tide that he had tried to stem. Directly before us, the Hippodrome appeared to be exhaling fire. Temporarily exhausted, more by the noise than by our exertions, we sank on the pavement against a house-wall, and I began to count the shells: they were exploding, as nearly as I could calculate, at the rate of five to the

minute. The concussions rattled the tiles, toppled chimney-pots, shook houses like an earthquake. Every man present thought he heard the forty-two centimeter guns; but just then none did hear them: they were reserved for a final horror.

I had felt no sting, but, now that I was at partial rest, I became aware of a dampness on my forehead. I touched it and then looked at my fingers in the flare of the next explosion: blood. Something had just nicked my scalp.

"I've been hit," I said tragically.

My friend grunted.

"Never mind," said he; "you were getting bald at all events."

I do not know how long we sat there. I remember that my head so ached from the noise that the imminent prospect of having it blown off did not greatly alarm me. It must have been at one o'clock in the morning that a redder red sprang up a few blocks below us, and, making toward it, we discovered that the new south-station of the Antwerp-Alost line was being destroyed. Then a great double chrysanthemum

of fire opened in the sky beyond the Pépinière, and a shout was raised that the entire Berchem district was in flames. I believe we covered the distance in fifteen minutes.

I saw the great Baltimore fire: it was a terrible thing, but, lacking the shrapnel, it seemed a child's bonfire to this. To our startled eyes, the whole district appeared as a furnace filled with vaulting flames and bellowing smoke, shot through by draughts of sparks and riddled by howling shells. The noise and the effect of those shots hurtling above and about us was like nothing so much as it would be to stand in the center of the closest-built portion of New York's Second Avenue with the houses in flames on either hand and, overhead, two rushing trains passing each other with a deafening clatter and hurling hot iron below—indeed, the shell-sounds resembled uncommonly the noise of the elevated; but here, combined in one dreadful uproar with the flight and bursting of the projectiles, were the noises of the tumbling walls, the cries of the dispossessed and the yells of the wounded and dying.

The heat blistered our faces, singed our hair; the tumult of the flames was like the breakers on a rocky coast, and the noise of the explosions deafened. Every little while, a house that, a moment since, stood intact would, as if of its own volition, belch forth a sheet of fire; an instant later, its neighbor would collapse amid a hail of stones and a throat-filling cloud of mortar. Parties of squealing women and of men shouting and sweating plunged through the incandescent mist, their heads low, their hands before their blackened faces. Under the choking scent of burning wood and powder, the superheated atmosphere held, now and again, another odor, which sickened: the odor of human flesh frying in its own fat. For interminable moments the soot would blind us and the noise stupefy; we helpless onlookers could neither see nor hear one another: each soul seemed alone in a universal and cataclysmic Hell. . . .

It was close upon two o'clock when the bombardment shifted its objective, and the iron Central Station suffered. Directly in front of

that building, with shells tearing up the paving all about him, a man sat on a trunk and was saying over and over again:

"Berchem is burnt—all Berchem—but two steamers leave for Ostend in the morning."

It was from this station that a squad of soldiers finally ordered us home; but my friend refused to go until he had some information from them. Would Antwerp be destroyed? He frankly proposed not to believe their answer, but he would rather be shot immediately than go away without securing it.

Probably the corporal in charge was by this time used to madmen.

"If it is destroyed," said he, "the Germans will be no better off, for they would need a large garrison here, while our troops could then join with the main army of the French and English."

My friend snorted.

"What of that?" he demanded. "Where will our houses be by that time?"

All the while we were indoors, the ear-piercing bombardment, which none would have

believed could become heavier, grew more and more intense. It was like the long-drawn-out finale of some horrible and titanic symphony wherein the hideous music climbed higher and higher, note upon intolerable note, beyond all human dreaming. When, by day, I again returned to the street, it was to see only what I had already seen, hear what I had already heard: fortunately there was no wind, but the rue du Roi was burning, the rue du Prince, the rue Eronberg, the avenue Margrave and the avenue Tournhout were in flames. Some said that the police had emptied the oil-tanks before their ignition; others that the burning oil was flowing down the river toward the pontoon-bridge, which was the only way of escape to the east. There was no daylight: there was merely a twilight of acrid smoke through which flames roared and shrapnel screeched.

"They have two hundred guns at work," a limping soldier told me: "twenty-eights and thirties. Out there"—he waved his hand to indicate the inner line of forts—"it is a slaughter-house."

I hurried on, this time alone. The once splendid Avenue des Arts was full of broken masonry. For one moment the zenith cleared: at my feet lay the bodies of two women and a child, bloody and contorted; the face of one was a red pulp, and about it circled a spiral of flies; overhead the air was balmy, the sun high and warm, the blue sky burdened with a luminous peace. Then the dark horizon climbed upward, hid the housetops, blotted out the heavens and confined me in the ruined street.

The cathedral was still safe, though one of the shells, which were now carrying all the way to the Scheldt, had fallen in the Place Verte that faces it, and a café across from this had been injured. But the cathedral was lucky. The southern thoroughfares especially looked as if there had been a revolution and men had died upon the barricades. Heaps of crumbled stones had been tossed across them; electric-light wires curled from curb to curb; here and there a vast hole yawning in the rows of buildings, like that of a tooth knocked out from a set otherwise perfect, told how a single

house had been battered out of existence; again a whole row of houses was reduced to such a cluttered heap of débris that the very street lines were obliterated. One place had been clipped clean of its top floor; two sides of a room had been beaten out in another. Bodies of the innocent dead became a sight more frequent, horribly mutilated. . . .

I went again northward. I had thought, ten hours ago, that all Belgium was being emptied; but throughout this day also the stream of refugees continued. The withdrawal of the garrison had begun, and columns of wounded and exhausted soldiers were marching across the city and toward the pontoon-bridge—regiment after decimated regiment of men that moved as if they were so many exhausted automata, staggering, their eyes staring, their faces black with powder, their early nineteenth-century uniforms of green and orange and crimson torn, stained, often flapping in the wind. The noise of their marching feet was frequently the only sound that broke the brief intervals of silence between cannon-shots.

And the civilians? Men said that the Dutch mayors were warning away fugitives because Holland could house no more: they might as well have warned those animals which I once saw flying from a forest-fire. The few remaining boats, of whatever sort, resembled life-rafts at a wreck, the pontoon-bridge appeared to be awash under its swarming weight. Spilled bundles bobbed in the water, disgorging their heterogeneous contents. Not far away, I saw a long file of blue-clad children merging with the crowd: the wards of an orphanage fired by the bombardment. All about, the smell of sweat and dirt was pressed back upon the bodies from which it rose by the thickened atmosphere, and over the shuffling and squirming multitude of burden-bearers, the shells roared and barked, spitting lead and iron.

I watched them, giving what small help I could, until the military took possession of the bridge, and I remained in the open until four o'clock in the afternoon. We had now suffered almost as acutely as those who were hit. Imagine the scrape of a fiddle-bow across an



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**"THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE FORTY-TWO-CENTIMETER GUNS"**



e-string, kept up for one entire day; imagine the screech of a locomotive's whistle enduring, not five minutes, but for a night and a day without end. The mere din of it caused physical results, and the gutters in the neighborhood of the fugitives soon resembled the scuppers of a channel-steamer in a cross-sea. If one could only have replied, struck a single blow, fired a single shot in response, and then died; that would have been easy. But impotently to be shut up here while the sky rained destruction: this was the supreme agony.

When I got back to the house, my host was full of news, gathered, apparently, by sitting there and seeing no one: the Germans would respect only one of the Hague-flags, that upon the cathedral; they were directing their fire so as to avoid all such Antwerp property as was owned by German subjects; the roof of the hôtel de ville was stove in; the arsenal was in ashes; so was the military hospital; the prison having been shattered, the convicts were released; fifty German steamers and Rhinecraft, held at the docks, had been blown up; an earth-shaking

explosion and a spreading fan of light on the horizon had testified to the Belgians' annihilation of one of their own forts; the government-stored cargoes from those German ships held by the war's outbreak at Antwerp's quays were being looted by the remaining populace; the oil had been run from the Hoboken tanks so that the enemy could not ship it to Germany, where it was sadly needed. Of some of these rumors I have since received confirmation; a part was probably false; much of it was contradictory; but one piece, and that the most important, appeared at once to come from a reliable source: a friend of my host was a member of the Garde Civique; this man's commanding-officer had intimated that the Garde was about to be ordered to the hôtel de ville to give up their arms.

There was only one meaning to attach to this: the authorities were preparing to surrender. It was decided that I should leave the city immediately.

Toward ten o'clock at night there came a lull in the shell-fire. Not guessing that this was but our enemies' pause for breath before their

last crushing effort, we took it as an opportune moment—and, as the event seemed to prove, all the remaining civilians in Antwerp, save those who never left it, shared our point of view.

We opened the door: it was a night without a stir of wind ("Thank God, there is no wind!" my host muttered, as we passed into the street); but we had gone only the briefest distance before the investing artillery, as if realizing that the end was near, redoubled its superhuman efforts. Within a few minutes there was certain evidence that the cannonade was now general; the entire city, save for the possible exemption of such buildings as the cathedral, seemed blistering and bursting under one great down-pour of fire and iron. All Antwerp seemed ablaze; the air in the street was like that in a ship's engine-room.

We started on a trot for the river-road. Street-lamp there was none, and the atmosphere was alight only with a livid incandescence that illuminated the destruction, but betrayed one's feet. Shells seemed to break over our very heads, tiles dropped by our ears, now and

then the street heaved and splintered ahead of us. I said to myself that nothing could be more terrible—and just then the more terrible happened.

A rare light—perhaps it was a searchlight—was playing on a portion of the street far ahead of me. Suddenly something bolted past above my head toward that light—something hot, scorching, and of tremendous size, something that roared like a frightened train and sped like a meteoric sun. The very draft of it seemed first to suck me upwards and then hurl me far forward and sidewise on my face. I fell, as a man might fall before a cyclonic blast from the furnace where worlds are made; but, as I fell, I saw, or thought I saw, that meteoric sun explode up there where the searchlight played. If I thought of anything, it was of an earthquake. I know that there shot out a sheet of flame that must have been two or three hundred feet wide and fully as high. I know that a Niagara of stones and clay leaped upward from the distant spot. I know that a hail of pulverized stone poured all about me, and that

the detonation rocked the city of Antwerp as a giant might rock a cradle that he stumbled over. I know that now; but then all that I knew clearly was that all our previous alarms had been trifles and that this at last was the beginning of the forty-two centimeter guns.

We staggered at last to our feet; we blundered here and there and into another wide thoroughfare and were immediately engulfed by a tremendous mob whose desperate destination was our own. Instantly we became drops of that shouting, scrambling, struggling tidal-wave of sheer humanity in the bulk of which—householders flinging away their rescued treasures, husbands forgetting wives and mothers becoming separated from children—there survived only the brute-instinct of self-preservation. The air crackled like marble under hammer-blows; the ears ached, the head throbbed, the brain reeled. Civilization, progress, culture: this seemed the end of them; it was as if they had never existed, or, having existed, had been as smiling masks to cover for a day the snarling face of the tiger that is Man.

Lesser shells were nothing now. They fell hot in our midst and mowed people down: the crowd seemed to trample their screaming mouths into silence. Again and again the blasts enveloped us. Of one the shock hurled my friend and me, still, fortuitously together, into a darkened gateway. A half-dozen soldiers lay there, sleeping the sleep of exhaustion amid all this pandemonium and carnage; their faces were drawn by weariness, white with fatigue where they were not black with powder; already they looked dead. A shell exploded over the house next door, tearing off its cornice.

"They're getting close again," said my friend. "We must move on."

We replunged into the mob. We had not gone a hundred yards when, behind us, there was a frightful crash. I looked back: the house before which we had been pausing pitched, over those sleeping soldiers, bodily into the street.

A stampede of shouting carbineers swept out of a side-street, bowling over all who stood in their way. Our wave swerved to the left and

into a dark thoroughfare. From the crowd an old woman seized my arm; she spoke with multiplicity of fumbling gestures, her very fingers trembling, but she spoke Flemish and, even if I could have understood the language, I should not have been able to hear more than a separate word or two. She put my hand to her breast, and I felt that her dress was wet and sticky with blood.

Once more the light increased and the noise. Again and again explosions flung us to the street. Weighted with a destruction before which the powers of cordite seem puerile, a shell from a forty-two centimeter gun would strike a building and the entire structure would vanish in a puff of smoke—absolutely vanish, so that when the smoke cleared, there was nothing where it had stood save a great hole in the ground. Now, so highly increased was the activity of even the lesser cannon that when they alone were in action, one had to shout to be heard at all by his neighbor.

Most of what happened I do not remember. Once I tried to think of my home, of the quiet

order of my daily life, of the busy routine of peaceful cities: it was inconceivable; it was something that I must have dreamed a thousand years ago. I lost my friend; I saw a shell coming and plunged against a closed door. It gave way, and I staggered into a room where a woman sat calmly knitting. She looked at me without surprise, even without curiosity, not speaking. When the explosion was over, I went out. The last that I saw of her, she was still knitting, as unmoved as a god.

Back in the crowd, people were now dropping out on every side, not heeded. There was the strong odor of slaughter. Here a man flung up his hand, yelled and pitched forward on his face; there another lay by the curb with blood flowing from his mouth. I remember picking up a child whose leg was shattered and giving it into the care of some persons in a nearby house—and yet I wonder if I really did this. As we neared the exit from this city of horrors, the struggle grew, and the bitterness of fights for places in advance was added to that of death from bursting shrapnel.

All the abominations of battle reached their climax. I think that if anybody had been so silly as to tell those men that the race had progressed since it was apes, they would have died of laughter at his preposterous supposition. Women became sick from the throat-biting stench of the exploding shells; some of them lay in the doorways, wrapping their skirts about their heads to lessen by some smallest fraction that insufferable uproar. One man, apparently quite resolute of heart, lost all control of his legs; we read of people's knees knocking together in fright: this man seemed less afraid than most, but his muscles ceased to function, and his knees so beat together that he collapsed. In front of me, another man's head leapt from his shoulders; for an instant his trunk stood erect, from the stump that was his throat a red fountain spurting upward, then the decapitated body crumpled grotesquely to the street. I bent stupidly toward it, but a woman behind me urged me on; slipping, nevertheless, she sought with a careless kick, to shove the corpse out of her way; its hand seemed to wave at her de-

risively. An instant later, as a shell descended, she sank on her knees to pray. . . .

That was the end of it: we gained the River-road. We had begun to believe those shells to be malevolent deities bent on the cutting to pieces of a world, to be at least possessed of a consciousness of their own, a diabolic consciousness; they were angered by the old town's refusal to surrender, enraged by its resistance; they were avenging the failures of their predecessors: they were devils gone mad with the smell of blood and the din of destruction. In half an hour more, all that was behind us. I looked back at the roofs and towers silhouetted against a red glare, covered by a huge pall of smoke. On every side flames seemed to leap heaven-high. Antwerp lay there burning like Valhalla.



## VI

### AT THE GRAVE OF A GREAT TRADITION

I HAD lived in England for four years; but, from its outbreak, I never quite understood what this war meant to her until a certain dark, autumnal day, months after the war began. I had done a little—a very little—toward helping England's work for the Belgian refugees that sought her shores; but I never until then understood the spirit back of that work.

London on that day was wrapped in a pall of yellow fog. It lay heavily on the broad streets; it swathed the tops of buildings as if it were some strange veil of mourning about a myriad of widowed heads; its fringes crossed a leaden sky through which no faintest hint of blue could pierce.

London shivered with the dispiriting cold. Raw and penetrating, the November chill gleamed wetly on the pavements. It crept

through the damp walls of shops and factories, shot between the crevices of rat-eaten tenements, gnawed its way into the vitals of palaces.

London was silent. The greatest city in the world, the roar of whose traffic is one of the pat phrases of travel-talk, now scarcely whispered; it breathed low. The mighty Strand, daily choked by howling vehicles, presented to view an empty roadway lined by motionless infantrymen shrunk into brown overcoats and resting upon bayoneted rifles. The pavements from Charing Cross to Ludgate Hill were jammed with a throng that stood still. Black thousands made a solid mass of humanity along Northumberland Avenue and Victoria Embankment, from Trafalgar Square to St. Paul's, and yet scarcely a sound was heard.

And this was at ten o'clock of a week-day morning in the heart of the capital of one of the greatest civilizations that our earth has borne. It was a moment that future historians will celebrate in pompous periods as perhaps the foremost crisis of the world-war. It was the moment when a mighty nation at the high-

tide of its struggle for sheer existence paused to do honor to its past. England, the Island Kingdom, and Britain, the globe-empire, were paying their last tribute to one of their hero-dead.

For two hours that human sea had remained at somber rest. For two hours in the yellow fog, the biting cold, the dour quiet. It was waiting the funeral-procession of the spare figure loved by every Briton under the name of "Bobs," of that general who had warned it of this European struggle and whom, loving, it had failed to heed: it was waiting the funeral-procession of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of India and Africa, of Madras and Kandahar.

Half-past ten—and a great gun boomed solemnly, muffled by the fog, from the direction of St. James's Park. A few faint strains of music followed, painfully creeping through the sodden air. That shot was the first of nineteen minute-guns fired by the Hampshire Artillery; that music was Chopin's "*Marche Funèbre*" played by the military-band in the closed courtyard of Charing Cross Railway station. The

special train had arrived from Ascot, where the private services had been held, and the coffin had been carried to a gun-carriage, escorted by a detail of the Royal Horse Artillery, while a guard of honor came to salute, and the chiefs of the Empire's army and navy stood by bare-headed in the now steadily falling rain.

The crowd stirred. Along the ganglia of its mighty organism there passed, from the barred station-gates to the barrier stretching across the street before St. Paul's, a long-drawn sigh. The line of great-coated soldiers shivered. Here and there one of the many new special constables, in their novel uniform of dark overcoat and peaked caps, hurried across the Strand. Again the gun boomed, and again. The music came nearer. There was the sound of thousands catching breath, leaning forward, searching that billowing curtain of sulphurous fog which barred the thoroughfare.

One expected the usual heralds. One waited for the blare of trumpets, the brisk clatter of hoofs, the cheers that greet every parade.

There was none of these. The music had

ceased; the steps of the marchers dragged; the multitudes watched with lips compressed as the fog-curtains parted and the procession came through.

“Slow march” was the order, and slowly marching they advanced. First a line of pipers, the London Scottish, their weird instruments swinging dumbly at the breast. After them, to the sole accompaniment of scraping boots, column upon column of soldiers—the Fourteenth County of London Battalion of the London Scottish, the Fifth Battalion of the Royal Sussex, the Fourth of the Grenadier Guards—not in the bright plaid and scarlet with which the old London was familiar, but all in somber greatcoats, their muskets reversed, passing between the twin rows of guardians at the curbs who rested on their arms. More and more they came, these mourning military, out of the fog from the Embankment, along a briefly visible strip of mid-day twilight, and then down New Bridge-street and into the fog once more.

It was this silence that was hardest to bear.

It was intense, abnormal. The multitude gasped as if in loud relief when, having passed into the yellow clouds that enveloped the thoroughfares about St. Paul's, the band of the Scots Guards resumed the music of the Chopin march.

Came the Second Battalion of the Irish Guards, fresh from the battlefields of northern France; a khaki-coated detachment of the Royal Naval Brigade, a company of cadets and, in uniforms of light blue and gray, some boys from the Officers-Training Corps at Eton. Then, through the curtain, stepped a group of little mules, each with a queer pack upon its back and each led by a man in a dull red turban.

"The Indian mountain-batteries," whispered somebody—what talk there was came always in a whisper: "See the guns they carry strapped to them?"

A battery of the Royal Horse Artillery followed, and after it a single gun-carriage.

That gun-carriage bore something draped with the Union Jack. On the flag was a red velvet case on which rested glittering insignia.



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*"THAT FLAG WHICH HE HAD FOUGHT FOR COVERED THE BODY OF 'BOBS'."*



Behind, a black-liveried groom led a nervously-stepping horse.

There was a soft new sound along the street: the watching thousands were removing their hats. Here was the gun-carriage to save which Lord Roberts's only son had given his life in South Africa. This was the dead marshal's charger; those were his baton, service-cap and medals; that flag which he had fought for covered the body of "Bobs."

The crowd stood uncovered in the now pelting rain. They seemed scarcely to see the group of distinguished officers that came behind the coffin. Followed—in dull khaki and not in their shining breastplate and gay scarlet and blue—the Royal Horse Guards and the First Life Guards, King Edward's Horse in full complement bringing up the rear. The multitude of London was standing almost regardless of them while they filed past in a seemingly endless line, long after the head of the procession had entered St. Paul's.

That historic cathedral, the last home of so many of England's famous soldier and sailor

dead, though open now only to ticket-holders, was well nigh filled an hour before the funeral-service began. Its coronals of lights fell dimly over tattered battle-flags that had waved in fields where the kingdom won her glory and the Empire her empyre. Only a faint twilight prevailed. The stained-glass of the windows was a series of dark patches, brown like dried blood. The always great distances assumed the air of immensity. The splendid dome held a cloud of mist, and far away into the cloistered shadows faded a huge congregation in civilian black or service uniform with here and there a lonely coat of red.

Half-past eleven: a door swung open and a number of men in red robes, the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, passed to their seats in the choir. Eleven-forty: in flowing vestments black and white, the Bishop of London and his fellow-priests passed down the main aisle to the great entrance to meet the dead man there.

The next moments were moments of tense waiting. Played by the band of the Royal

Artillery, Schubert's "Adieu," which Lord Roberts loved, tore at the heartstrings of the attending throng. Violins sang with the piercing sweetness of nightingales; the pure notes of a harp took up the refrain and died away in echoes, trailing through the distant dome. The music of the Funeral March sobbed forth. There came the marrow-chilling roll of artillery-like kettledrums, broken by the shattering rifle-crash of snare-drums, and then the arrived procession was proceeding toward the altar in the east.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life . . ."

The cathedral clergy led the way, their choir following. The coffin came next, borne high on the shoulders of eight sergeants who had served in the armies under "Bobs'" command. Immediately after it walked Lord Kitchener, his expression set, his brow furrowed, his features a little harder and a little older than they appear in pictures of him which are so popular in America. He was one of several honorary pallbearers, among whom Admiral Lord Charles Beresford was conspicuous for his

handsome, bigoted face. The Archbishop of Canterbury came next, and after him, having entered the cathedral almost unnoticed, the King of England and Emperor of India.

He wore a service-cap and army-boots on which spurs glimmered. His overcoat was that of an officer on active duty, and about its left sleeve passed a crêpe band. His bearded face was grave. Word was passed that Queen Alexandra and the Princess Victoria had come privately to the cathedral, but few saw them. For the moment all eyes were on the King, who stepped to his seat in an ancient, high-backed, oaken chair by the steps to the south transept, close to the cleared central square beneath the dome where, high above the heads of the congregation and surrounded by flickering candelabra, the coffin now rested, just over the grave of Nelson, on the catafalque used at the funeral of Wellington, sixty years ago.

The members of the funeral-party took their several stations round about—Admiral Sir E. H. Seymour, Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, representatives of foreign royalty, leaders of

the Government and the Opposition, French soldiers and bearded Russians, a Serbian minister aglow with medals, Indian officers, deputations from the War Office and Admiralty, the diplomatic corps—they were grouped about the catafalque. Motionless they sat beneath the coffin.

It was such a little coffin. There seemed something incongruous in its littleness amid this panoply of which it was the center. A little wooden box wherein was held what remained of a long service and what remained of an ancient order of things far older, an ancient order that included so many services, so many conquests and defeats, so many acquisitions of empire, fights by sea and land, night marches and pitched battles, so many countless thousands of sacrificed lives since English history began.

The funeral-service was, of course, that of the Church of England, but much abbreviated here, because parts of it had been previously celebrated in France and at Lord Roberts' Ascot home: the war, besides, left public men

small leisure even for the burial of their dead. The prescribed opening sentences were chanted to the music composed by Dr. Croft; the magnificent cathedral choir, perhaps the world's best, chanted Barnby's setting of the Twenty-third Psalm; Dean Inge of St. Paul's read the Lesson (I Cor. xv, 50) and, at the request of Lord Roberts' family, there followed, over the body of this man of battles, the hymn beginning:

Peace, perfect peace.

Then the Bishop of London, himself a chaplain at the front, read the prayers. There was a movement among the mourners. The King rose and came forward from one side, Lord Kitchener from the other, and, to the light of the flickering candles, while the Dean pronounced the committal-sentences, the coffin, removed from the Wellington catafalque, was lowered for a few feet of its descent into a grave that yawned near the chancel.

The eyes of the monarch and his general met across that grave. The choir found voice—"For all Thy saints who from their labors rest"

—and, while the world-war hung in the balance a few hundred miles away amid the storm-whipped trenches of northern France, here, in the Empire's capital, amid her soldier dead, there rose to the old dome those familiar words:

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,  
Steals on the ear that distant triumph-song,  
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong—  
Alleluia!

The Archbishop of Canterbury pronounced the benediction. Wearing his gorgeous tabard of red and gold, the Garter King-at-Arms came to the choir-steps and, facing the great nave, followed an ancient custom: "proclaimed the styles and titles" of the dead. The congregation stood. Again Chopin's "*Marche Funèbre*" wailed through the cathedral, and, as it ceased, from somewhere in that mighty pile there came a great blast of trumpets: the trumpeters of the Royal Artillery rang out the "Last Post."

They went away, all the dignitaries, all the mourners: royalty, military, statesmen, diplomats. For hours out in the sleet, a huge

crowd of people that these mourners governed had been waiting, and now, from two o'clock until five, that crowd filed beside the lowered coffin—thousands of men, women and children. They too looked at the little box under its Union Jack and guarded by its sentries—looked, and went their way. Save for the attendants, the cathedral was empty, the famous dead deserted. Darkness fell on nave and chancel, and in that darkness the burial of Lord Roberts was completed, and “Bobs” was laid to rest with Nelson and with Wellington.

Did that burial mark an epoch? When this war began, we were told that it was a war to end war; but already there are other signs in the heavens. Meanwhile, two things are certain: First of them, the charity that comes with every sense of loss has bred in England new strength of purpose to right, whatever else she does, the wrongs of Belgium who bled for her. And next, and perhaps philosophically as important, the old sort of war is over; in its place has appeared a new trade whereat old fingers are useless; modern methods have in-

creased the horrors of battle and robbed the dying soldier of his glory—Frederick Sleigh, Lord Roberts, represented a past order; when he was buried in St. Paul's, a mighty tradition was buried with him.

## VII

### THE IRON RAIN AT SCARBOROUGH

EVEN after the death of Lord Roberts, England had still something to learn of what the war meant to Belgium. The island's resolution to right the wrongs of her little sister-state was taken, was even established: the willingness of the people was stirred, was even splendidly at work. The British Empire, fighting for its life, and the British populace, scanning casualty-lists that day by day grew until there remained scarce one English family without some member dead, wounded, prisoner or missing—both had made space among their sufferings for a working-out of their debt and duty to that Kingdom and its people across the shallow North Sea. But the immediate appreciation of what Belgium and the Belgians endured was still to be brought home to England and Englishmen.



THE SPA AT SCARBOROUGH

"Since Sheridan laid in it the scene of one of his comedies, it has remained a popular bathing-resort."



When it did come, the example was far short of all that it exemplified. To those of us who saw it with eyes that had seen Antwerp, it was little. To those who, watching its brief panic and noting its speedily repaired destruction, could remember the legions of the starving and the leagues of desolation throughout the Belgian countryside, this attack seemed a trifle. But for the mass of the people of England, and for the Government upon which their public opinion reacted, it served. Germany has done an unspeakable wrong to Belgium; she did Belgium a mighty service—she even did a mighty service toward the strengthening of the English arms—when, in the morning of December 16, 1914, she bombarded Scarborough, Whitby and the Hartlepoons.

It is of the raid on Scarborough and Whitby that I chance to have a personal knowledge, because my house in England stands close to the cliff-edge along the shore, about four-and-a-half miles in a direct line from the former town and ten miles from the latter. Whitby I went to within a day of its visitation; a part of

the bombardment of Scarborough I watched through binoculars from my workroom windows as you, opera-glass in hand, may watch a mimic battle on the stage from a comfortable seat in the New York Hippodrome.

The Germans' own comments upon their raid are worth at least a partial quoting. The Berlin wireless-station sent out the following report:

Dec. 17, 6:20 A. M.

It is officially reported this morning that our high sea forces approached the East coast of England early on Wednesday morning and bombarded the fortified towns of Scarborough and Hartlepool.

According to English reports received here, more than 20 persons were killed and 80 wounded. In Hartlepool considerable damage has been done, one of the gas-reservoirs being on fire.

The bombardment of the fortress at West Hartlepool commenced between 8 and 9 A. M.

Two churches were damaged in Scarborough, and several roofs fell in. The weather was misty at the time of the bombardment.

From Hull it is reported that the authorities at Scarborough received information at an early hour of a proposed attack on the coast.

It is reported that two German cruisers fiercely bom-

barded Whitby and destroyed the signal station building.

As for the German newspaper-press, its statements had about the same measure of exactitudē. Two samples will serve: "Once more," said the *Berliner Tageblatt*, "our naval forces have shelled English fortified places."—"This time," declared the *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten*, "it is not merely a daring cruiser-raid, or the mere throwing of a bomb, but a regular bombardment of fortified places; it is further proof of the gallantry of our navy."

I am told in America that the Prussian press-bureau, in its reports intended for American consumption, has persisted in this attitude: continues to assert that Scarborough, Whitby and the Hartlepoons were "fortified towns." About Hartlepool I know nothing; but I do know that, last Dēcember, Scarborough and Whitby were no more fortified than are Asbury Park and Cape May.

Scarborough is a closely-built town that climbs from the water-front of two small bays,

shut in by cliffs, up a steep hill for about a mile and a half inland—so closely built, indeed, that, in the old part of the town nearest the sea, the tall, thin houses lean over one another along dark and narrow passageways and winding streets that are often merely flights of desperate stairs. Scarborough has no factories; it is one of the few towns of its size in Yorkshire upon which the blight of English industrialism has not descended. Since Sheridan laid in it the scene of one of his undeservedly forgotten comedies, it has remained a popular bathing-resort in summer, because of its splendid beach, and, until the morning of the attack, had been through some years becoming an almost equally popular health-resort, because of its bracing air, for invalids in wintertime. This popularity has made it rich without the aid of blackening chimneys or roaring looms. From June until September, its shifting population mounts high into the hundred-thousands; from September until January its annual visitors are many and loyal; throughout the year, its householders, increased by a large number of wealthy

men retired here with their families from active business, remain at about forty-five thousand.

Much of it is beautiful. There are pleasure-grounds about the lake a quarter-mile from the sea-front to the north, and handsome gardens along the cliff-tops to the south of it. The center of the town is cut by a deep valley converted into a pretty park where the trees run almost to the ocean, and there are driveways up Oliver's Mount, the hill five hundred feet high, at the back. The new town is as modern as this morning's newspaper, with such department-stores as the Rowntrees', which it would be difficult to equal in any town of twice this size in America; with theaters in which even the best of English players do not scorn to appear, and with a score of boarding-schools that are famous throughout the country. The old town, descending to the beach with all the caution of a new mountaineer descending an Alpine slope, is, on the other hand, delightfully mediæval and boasts, intact, a house that Richard III. once, for a short time, made his home. The Foreshore, of course, is the typical fore-

shore of an English seaside-resort, lined with shops and large hotels. Finally, dividing the two bays, cutting the town into "Northside" and "Southside," and surrounded by a drive and breakwater which were constructed at enormous cost, and against which the broken waves are said to leap higher than they do almost anywhere else in the world, rises the Gibraltar-like Castle-Hill that bears upon its top the remnants of that castle from which Piers Gaveston went out to die; against which Cavalier and Roundhead forces were in turn precipitated; in which Fox, the Quaker, was held prisoner, and near which the gentlest of the Brontë sisters lies buried: a low wall, a grass-grown and deserted court and three sides of the Norman keep, a blackened ruin since that day when Bonny Prince Charley marched on Prestonpans.

Scarborough was not fortified. I know this of my own personal knowledge; I know it from personal investigation both immediately before and immediately after the bombardment. On the Foreshore, at the foot of the Valley, there

had been piled a few bags filled with sand behind perhaps fifty yards of barbed-wire entanglements and in front of a couple of trenches. One night, shortly before the appearance of the German cruisers, I thought that I should like to see how these were manned: with a companion, I walked among and through the whole of them, and, save for a pair of lovers strayed from the park in the Valley, I did not meet a soul. Now, these childish "protections" were quite as undefended during the bombardment as they were on the night of my visit: there was, indeed, no means of defending them. There is, it is true, a barracks on Peasholme Road; but the barracks is a place of itself; it is not in the town, or, for that matter, very near it; the barracks is not a fort; it is not even an artillery-barracks; and, although the carefully calculated fire of the Germans showed that they had the neighborhood exactly mapped, they never once fired in the barracks' direction. In all Scarborough there was only a single piece of cannon, and that was a spiked relic of an almost forgotten

war, which stood as a curiosity in a park in the heart of the town and could not be operated if anybody wanted to operate it. On the morning of the raid, the population consisted solely of the civilian inhabitants, a number of guests—mostly invalids or valetudinarians—and several hundred girls and boys, pupils at the boarding-schools. Scarborough, I repeat, was absolutely unfortified, and the Germans, showing by their fire that they knew all about the town, showed also that they knew this.

Nor could the wildest imagination seriously believe Whitby to be a fortified town. All the world knows that it is no more than a pretty fishing-village, flanked by a small group of summer-hotels and curious jet-shops. On the cliff that here juts into the North Sea—that cliff off which, last Autumn, the hospital-ship *Rohilla*, with its company of surgeons and Red Cross nurses, broke in pieces and lay for three days while survivors braved the overwhelming waves—stands a small coast-guard station—a little shack to shelter a couple of watchers—and the remains of St. Hilda's



THE "FORTIFICATIONS" OF SCARBOROUGH  
"A blackened ruin since that day when Bonny Prince Charley  
marched on Prestonpons."



Abbey, one of the finest ruins in England, where, on the lips of the swine-herd Caedmon, the poetry of England began. Against this formidable city, the operations of two German warships—one battle-cruiser and one ordinary cruiser—were directed, and between a hundred and a hundred and fifty shots were fired. Harmless people were killed, houses were demolished: the ancient abbey did not escape.

There had been a fortnight of gray days, days of chill and rain and damp stagnation. A circular wall of mist shut Scarborough from all the world. The wall crossed Filey-road on the south, Forge Valley on the west, and Cloughton on the north; on the east it rose out of the sea.

After a war-spoilt season, the town lay morosely on its hill. The big hotels no more than stirred in their winter sleep; the shops barely breathed. Recruits came, were swallowed by the barracks, went away; out at Cloughton, Police Constable Chisholm would occasionally report some harmless neutral as a German spy; soldiers would appear from the

barracks, fade through the fog and, a little later, be said to die—*out there*; but in Scarborough nothing vital happened: events stood still.

Sometime between seven and eight o'clock on the dull morning of the sixteenth of December, three black boats nosed through the fog. They stood in for Scarborough and came quietly to rest before it.

Nobody paid any attention to them. The men in the street-repair gang thought the boats were English. The man in the ocean-front room of the big hotel yawned, thanked heaven that he did not have to get up, and snored again. The pupils at the girls' schools and boys' schools were called to prayers and breakfast.

But there must have been some change in the weather, because, quite suddenly, a thunderstorm rattled over the city. There was a good deal of lightning, and it came from the sea.

Of course it was a thunderstorm. For several minutes everybody was sure of that. Thunderstorms are not uncommon along the English East Coast in December. Besides—

there: you could see two bolts strike the outlying wall of the ruined Castle; they did it considerable damage. Only the street-repair gang had a different opinion: they thought that comrades were throwing rocks at them—for two minutes they thought that.

No longer. At the end of two minutes, Scarborough stopped, for half an hour, all thinking.

A circle of the street, ten feet in diameter, rose up and engulfed the repair-gang. The room next that occupied by the gentleman in the ocean-front apartment exploded and vanished. Tiles and chimney-pots pelted the business-men on their ways to shop and office, and the glass from hundreds of windows crashed over their heads. Breakfast at the young ladies' seminaries and boys' academies ended as sections of the schoolhouse roof smashed into the streets.

It was precisely thus that the bombardment of Scarborough began. Save for a couple of breathing-spaces, precisely thus it for thirty minutes continued.

I am not trying to tell you the news of it; you have that already—although the sapient censorship did its best to stop the local papers from telling the citizens just how much their fellow-townsmen and neighbors had suffered. I am trying to tell you only how Scarborough felt about the bombardment. It felt exactly as you would feel if, as you read these lines, the book blew up, burnt your face and killed a woman across the street.

For half an hour. During that period—and it seemed half a year—the black boats that had come from the sea spat fire and flung six-inch and twelve-inch shells over all the city: the old town had heard nothing like it since its castle was twice beleaguered during the Cromwellian wars; England had perhaps known nothing like it since the Dutch fleet swept the Channel; had certainly known nothing like it since, in plain sight of the spot whence those shots now came, John Paul Jones and the *Bon Homme Richard* made prizes of the *Serapis* and the *Countess of Scarborough*.

Out my way, which is "Cloughton way," one

could have it all for the looking: my one handicap was that I was slow to begin my observations. Being a sadly uncivilized American, and therefore still accustomed to the musketry-rattle of steam-heat, the roar of the wind in the chimneys of my house had provided me with the certainty of a bombardment every night that I passed at home for the two months past. So I heard this morning's real cannonade and heeded it not.

Binns, the housekeeper, came up. She is the traditional English housekeeper, whose like you seldom see in England, or anywhere else for that matter, save on the American stage. Her voice was even, her manner politely stolid. Save that the hour was slightly after eight o'clock, she might have been announcing the call of any one of my neighbors.

"I think they are bombarding Scarborough, sir," she said.

"Bombarding Scarborough?" I repeated.—I had been working late the night before and was only half awake. "Who are?"

"Well, sir"—she was all politeness!—"I

expect it would be the Germans, wouldn't it?"

"Nonsense, Binns!" said I.

"Very good, sir. Quite so, sir."

She turned to go.

That wind in the chimney was uncommon loud this morning. I asked:

"What makes you think there's a bombardment?"

"Jacques, the postman, has just been with the letters, sir. He saw the flashes from the guns as he reached the garden-gate."

"Jacques," said I—our postman is really fortunate enough to possess that Shakespearean surname, and audacious enough to pronounce it as if it were the plural of "Jake"—"Jacques has brought that news a dozen times before."

Nevertheless, I went into my workroom to look.

A light morning mist was rising like a theater-curtain from the long sweep of shore. The skies were still gray, but the entire southern stretch of coast, all the way past Filey Brigg to the white front of Flamborough Head,

could be made out. There, in the middle-distance lay Scarborough, running back from its pleasant bays, between which rose the miniature Gibraltar surmountd by the Castle's ruinous keep—and there, close in to shore, lay two dark cruisers, at first apparently as harmless as any fishing-craft.

“English boats,” I thought. “English cruisers were thick along the coast all yesterday.”

A little spurt of pale smoke came out of one of them.

“Target-practice,” I assured myself.

But even as I did so, I asked the question:

“Target-practice *toward the shore?*”

I ran for my glasses. I had scarcely got the focus before there came another spurt of smoke—now plainly touched with fire.

Another. Then another.

I followed the direction of one shot inland. It must have been an explosive-shell. I saw a white puff rise. Binns was right; the always expected, yet always unbelievable, had happened: the Germans were bombarding Scarborough.

I watched for several minutes, horrified, fascinated, curiously incredulous. Then, realizing that, from this point, one shot must be precisely like its fellows, I ordered a horse out of the stable and got into town faster, I am sure, than I had ever gone before.

What was happening in Scarborough the newspapers have long since told. From one end of it to the other, the shells were falling. Westborough, as the central portion of the chief business street is called, was full of darting bits of iron; men and women had dropped by the curb; to north and south, the entire city was being lashed with a whip of iron thongs.

One shot fell near the little building in which the coast-guards find shelter during those stormy nights when they keep watch for smugglers and whence they start to rescue ships in distress: the life-savers fled just in time to save their own lives—the next shell wrecked the house. Another passed directly through the round, white lighthouse on the quay, and its successor plowed a great hole in a field close by the wireless-station, two miles back. Then

came a crash in the Crescent, in the midst of the residence-district: the front wall of a house crumbled away, and the entire interior was a mass of kindling. Portions of roofing danced through the air; chimney-pots flew about like so many kites. The shots swung toward St. Nicholas Parade and smashed dwellings there; they ripped away two stories from a house in Lonsdale Road. From Castle Hill a shell picked up the ancient iron beacon—which, centuries ago, called all the countryside to arms—and flung it into the Castle dykes. A veritable cave, nine feet in diameter, was blown in a field near Stepney Road. Later, men found large pieces of shrapnel near Cayton, one of the Scarborough municipal pumping-stations, three miles south, and picked up more at East Ayton, a village five miles inland.

The workhouse was struck: one inmate was wounded, and a pensioner in the old men's ward was half buried in débris as he knelt in frightened prayer. A conical piece of metal burst into the Roman Catholic church of St. Columba and left a gaping aperture in the wall. In

the parish-church, the Archdeacon was celebrating Holy Communion when one of the earliest shells struck the roof.

The celebrant paused.

"It appears," he said to the kneeling congregation, "that we are being bombarded; but I think that we shall be as safe here as anywhere."— And he went on with the service.

A few minutes later a shell broke over the Municipal School. Several early pupils, arrived from the country-districts by train, rushed to the surrounding houses for safety.

A few of the fashionable boarding-schools were hit, and at one of them—Queen Margaret's, perhaps the best-known—there occurred something that has not yet, I believe, become "news." When the bombardment began, the governesses and tutors at nearly all the other schools took their pupils to the cellars. Not so at Queen Margaret's. The authorities of that institution ordered their charges—all young girls—to run for their lives, and, themselves setting the pace, charged a mile or more through city streets and along



GERMAN SHELLS IN ENGLAND

"The shots ripped away two stories from a house in Lonsdale Road."



country lanes while shells burst on every side, kicked up the dust behind them and rattled over their heads.

A young girl living near us—her parents were at their London house—had a younger sister at this school and felt responsible for her safety. At the start of the bombardment, she determined to motor to her sister's rescue. The servants tried to dissuade her, the police to turn her back: both failed. She reached the school safely and found the street-door open.

There was no response to her repeated ringing of the bell; but at last a neighbor thrust a frightened head from a window.

"There's nobody in the school," he said. "They've all run away. I think I heard them call out that they were going to try to run to Seamer."

To Seamer, the nearest village south of Scarborough, the girl sped in her motor-car. There she was told that "such of the pupils as got there" had run on to the railway-station a mile or more away. At the station the word was that the fugitive pupils had been hustled

into a passing train for London. The little motorist returned to the village and began a house-to-house canvass: she found her sister the involuntary guest of a kindly cottager.

The English censor, so tender of our emotions, has permitted the publication of the usual stories of miraculous escapes, and most of the correspondents have fully availed themselves of his lenience. Doubtless you have already read of the tenant of Gresham House, on the North Cliff, who, through his binoculars, was watching the men on the German decks when one of their shots scalped his residence. Doubtless, too, you have heard of the shelled bookshop wherein the only injured volume was that entitled "Imperial Germany." There was one man who told how he had run cellarward without stopping for his coat and returned, an hour later, to find it torn to shreds in his smashed cupboard—a narrative presumably based on the assumption that it was the coat, and not the cupboard, which had been foredoomed.

These incidents composed the lighter side of the raid, and it is as well that there was a lighter side, for all the other sides are dark enough and to spare.

Of them, too, when the censorship was perforce relaxed, you have been told. You know by this time the tragedies of that iron rain from the sea. You know how one man was dressing in his bedroom when a shell burst there and killed him; how two servants were blown to pieces in a kitchen; how a wife, having rushed to her husband's side, was struck and slaughtered, while her husband remained unharmed; how a woman and two children were crushed in the ruins of one house; how another woman ran to close the windows of her shop and met a shell that crashed through them; how four persons were killed in one house in Wykeman Street; and how others were picked up dead on the pavements.

As suddenly as it had begun, the firing ceased. A streak of light appeared in the sky to the southeast. Before it the mist of battle

retreated, and, like creatures of that mist, the black-nosed boats disappeared. The bombardment was over.

Instantly, under heavens rapidly brightening to the clearest blue, the entire appearance of the town changed. Policemen came from nowhere—nurses, too. A rapidly devised, but thoroughly efficient, order manifested itself; the crowds that swarmed into the streets (chiefly in search of shell-mementoes, wherein there was an active bull market) were being quietly marshaled; companies of sweepers were brushing up the *débris* (and making a tidy penny out of the sale of the bits of shell); toward the hospitals, through many a street, were moving little processions of Boy Scouts bearing stretchers on which lay figures swathed in bloody bandages, the faces ashen, the eyes glazed. . . . You would have thought that the remedy for the effects of bombardment was a part of the daily routine of British municipal authority.

I walked for some hours through the town that I had known during four years of its pros-

perity. Tottering chimneys, tiles trembling on roof-edges, rows upon rows of splintered windows, roofs open to the sky, brick walls crushed to powder, house-fronts stripped away, and the interiors of bedrooms bare to the sight as if they were stage scenes or rooms in the burning palace of Priam as Æneas last saw it: these things were not wrought by wind in the chimney; they were no suggestion to my brain from the brain of Jacques the postman. Nor was this a fancy, this slow-stepping procession with a stretcher in its midst, and on the stretcher a woman dying. . . .

I tramped about amid the crunching glass and crackling slates. I stood before a house where iron railings had been uprooted, twisted and embedded in the woodwork. Small pieces of iron rails, neatly severed, were scattered with bits of uprooted asphalt. I saw all the horrors and all the grotesque deviltries of the cannonade.

And I saw something else: either that day or the next, I saw some of the unexploded and unbroken projectiles that had been used by the

Germans. They were six-inch, and a few twelve-inch, shrapnel and penetrating shells. The shrapnel, stuffed with bits of jagged waste metal, were cones quite an inch in thickness; they bore, around and across, numerous cuts or indentations so that, in bursting, the missile would divide itself into squares of about three-quarters of an inch in size. The others were smaller missiles, and yet it was one of these that, striking the seafront wall of the Grand Hotel, cut through the bricks as if they had been so much paper.

Panic, of course, there had been while those shells were falling, all stories to the contrary notwithstanding: there is no town in the world in which there would not be more or less panic in similar circumstances. A portion of the exodus of the more timid I had encountered on my hurried way into town: the packed trains, roads crowded with motors and luggage-laden carriages, byways full of folk afoot. Here was a fat man panting under the weight of two suitcases: his own small one bumping from his left hand, his wife's large one from his right.

There rolled a double-seated landau with a little chap of twenty as its only passenger, and opposite him a veritable hill of luggage: hand-bag and kit-bag, suit-case and jewel-case, trunk, satchel and hat-box. There were children astride of donkeys once rented to excursionists for five minutes' ride on the South Sands; wives still in the aprons that they had been wearing in the kitchen when the first shell exploded; collarless husbands in smoking-jackets and carpet-slippers; even a few late-rising children, bare-footed and wrapped in blankets. The highways were well populated that morning, and the railway-station was jammed with a clamoring crowd. In a small way, they were beginning to understand the Belgians.

And yet, even this flight of these English folk was orderly. Short of duration it was, too, and I soon found that nearly everybody accepted the situation with a calm that was amazing to my American consciousness. It was an hysterical woman of uncertain age that, talking to herself (but with an eye to possible listeners) looked at one scene of ruin and remarked: "I

don't like this war; it's a detestable war. I don't like it at all." And it was little better, though he wore male garments, that I saw turn away from a passing stretcher to a smashed chemist's shop and groan: "Do you know, I believe those Germans were deliberately trying to destroy property—deliberately trying to destroy property, by Jove!"

These were clearly sightseers from elsewhere. They began to come in from York and Huddersfield, from Leeds and even from Manchester, as soon as it was certain that the raid was over, and they kept on arriving and looking and departing for several days. Above all, they said, they wanted to know "how it happened," and they seemed to think that the way to come by that knowledge was to pry among the splintered ruins. One of them I heard give voice to a theory that, some days after my return to America, I saw repeated here. It first came to my ears in Scarborough on a day somewhere about the eighteenth of December; on a day about the twenty-third of January I saw it printed as part of an European letter in the

Chicago *Herald*. I give it in the words of the latter:

"The English Navy, through the intervention of nature, narrowly escaped a tremendous disaster following the raid on Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool. The coast attack was a marine bait.

"A number of German submarines accompanied the Kaiser's cruisers. They took position, submerged, along the line of retreat planned by the German ships. The expectation was that the British ships would pursue, and then the submarines would get to work. Pursuit started, but an impenetrable fog settled down, saving a number of British ships from almost certain destruction."

That is a plausible statement. It has only one flaw: from 8:30 A. M. until sunset, the sixteenth of last December at Scarborough, and out upon the North Sea, was innocent of all fog; it was a bright day and cloudless; the night was clear and starlit.

Already I have twice mentioned the censor. It is impossible to write anything of England

in wartime without mentioning him frequently. I used sometimes to console myself for his restrictions by trying to imagine what it is that, if the English censor suppresses the truth, the German censor utters. Free, however, of both officials for the present, I feel that I would be doing an injustice to the former if I said nothing of his attempted siege of Scarborough.

I was not aware of it until the evening of the sixteenth. By some means or other, the *London Chronicle* had got a message to me during the afternoon, saying that, in addition to the news which would be sent it by a member of its staff dispatched to the bombarded city, it would like a thousand words from me describing the appearance of Scarborough after the attack. I went into the postoffice, where the government-owned telegraph is housed, at about six o'clock in the evening—nine and a half hours after the last shell of the Germans' five hundred had fallen. Remembering the habits of my newspaper-days, a decade ago, I asked the telegraph-clerk:

"How soon can you handle a thousand words?"

The clerk looked bewildered.

"Would to-morrow do?"

As gently as I could, I explained to him that, odd as it might appear, I was not trying to telegraph my thousand words to a monthly magazine, but to a daily paper.

"Then I am afraid that we can't help you, sir," he said; "news-material is not to be given preference, and we have only just begun to handle messages handed in at noon."

Thinking that the Scarborough *Mercury* might have a private wire to London, I went to the office of that local newspaper. There the managing-editor sat with his arms outspread on his desk and his head in his hands, all about him neat piles of manuscript, each bearing the evidences of careful editing and each weighted with a bit of metal.

"A private wire?" he repeated in answer to my question. He did not raise his despondent head. "No, we haven't a private wire; the Government would not permit it."

"You don't seem well," I began. "Is there anything the matter?"

He waved a feeble hand toward those piles of manuscript.

"Everything is the matter," he moaned. "Here's this town bombarded—the first real German attack on English soil since the war began. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds' worth of damage done. Whole houses destroyed. People killed. Hospitals full of wounded. Population in panic. Everybody crazy to get the lists of the hurt. My God, man, it's the one thing that's happened in Scarborough since Cromwell stormed the Castle; and do you know what's the only news the Censor will let me print? It's this: 'A German ship fired a few shells into Scarborough to-day; the situation is developing!'"

Only the arrival of wounded fugitives from the East Coast at King's Cross spread the news in London and forced the censorship to let the Scarborough papers print the truth at 9:30 P. M. For my part, I sent my manuscript by post: so heavily had the few telegraphed details



"THERE, IN THE MIDDLE-DISTANCE, LAY SCARBOROUGH"

View from the author's house, looking south, on the morning of the bombardment.



been cut that my version was welcomed in London forty-eight hours after the event.

Meanwhile, my news had ceased to be news: Scarborough, if it had not already recovered, was at least again upon its feet and in the ring. It made me recall the old proverb of "A Scarborough Warning"—that is to say, "A word and a blow, but the blow first." The town which can make such a phrase current through the centuries has proven itself able to accept that phrase when made a reality and used against it. Scarborough and Whitby, unfortified, defenseless, had been attacked in defiance of all the laws of war; but Scarborough and Whitby—and, through them, all England—had learned completely Belgium's lesson and Great Britain's need.

## VIII

### BELGIUM IN ENGLAND

WHEN the war began, the English Government said that it recognized its duty to the Government of Belgium; shortly after the war began, the English people came to a whole-hearted realization of their duty to the Belgian people. By that time there were three hundred thousand Belgians in England. One might almost say that another nation had been set down among the English—a nation of different customs, different creed and different speech: three hundred thousand penniless men crippled by age, wounds or disease; destitute women, whose husbands had died across the sea, whose sons, brothers, lovers, were lost to them; children, mostly orphaned and all with none to feed them. These composed the problem that England had to solve.

She set to work to solve it beautifully, and

though the influx seemed never to lessen, her courageous charity but grew with the increase of its burdens. We hear a great deal, and much in justice, of the rigidity of the English character and its inability to adapt itself to the characteristics of other nations: that rigidity became flexibility. We hear a great deal, with less reason, of English coldness: if that ever existed, this new heat of generosity has melted it completely away. Apart from all question of the origin of the dreadful war, apart from all question of the rights and wrongs of the armed controversy, the people of England, in their welcome to the Belgian non-combatant refugees, in their unselfish and self-sacrificing care of them, have done and are doing something that must forever command the respect of the whole world.

This is no place to catalogue, still less to describe, the hundred-and-one clubs, guilds, societies, funds, foundations, the legion of every sort of organization, immediately formed and systematically maintained for the purposes of assistance to the Belgian refugees: the titles

and work of those organizations have all, long ago, been given and explained in the American press. Nor shall I attempt to show how money was easily raised and wisely expended—raised by the organizations, the newspapers, the churches, schools, cities, towns and villages; by scores of individuals; by personal solicitation, advertisements, circular, sermon, lecture, bazaar, countryside concert, metropolitan dance, quiet self-denial; by the school-boys' half-pennies, the poor man's gladly offered tithe, the rich man's check. All that I wish to make clear is that, without stopping to argue that native needs had closer claims—giving, in point of fact, more to native needs than it ever gave before—the whole of England contributed and continued contributing to the Belgians. In his "Frederick the Great," Carlyle, by one of his masterly figures of speech, shows us the unpaid Prussian army standing at review with its pockets turned inside-out: England, with those three hundred thousand dispossessed Belgians on her shores, herself voluntarily emptied her pockets *for* them.

Money was the least of it. The rich converted their houses into Belgian hostels, as the refuges for Belgian civilians were popularly called; the poor worked without pay for the Belgians' needs. I know a girl who has an "Hon." before her name, who, now that her father has converted his countryplace into a Belgian hostel, sweeps its floors. There is a Master of the Supreme Court who scrubs the steps of a Belgian hostel at Ealing. The wife of one of the Cloughton-folk whose title is among the oldest in England spent an entire day, when her baby was scarcely a month old, stopping every passing motor-car and selling to the driver of each nosegays for the local Belgian relief fund. In the same village, the daughter of a cottager, a girl for two years bedridden, dressed dolls and sold them for the same purpose. I know an out-of-work gardener who gave a third of his small savings, and a workman earning only twenty shillings a week who gave a half-crown to the Belgian fund on every Saturday night. These instances are a few out of my own experience;

there is nobody in England that could not add to them and multiply them.

Somebody with more wit than sentiment has said that when Englishmen fly to arms, English women fly to their knitting-needles, and a friend of mine in the army tells me that the British soldier in the French trenches heartily welcomes the "cholera-belts" that the English women knit for him by the hundred, because he finds those belts so useful for cleaning his rifle. Both of these statements are true; but neither, it seems to me, lessens the value of the English women's knitting. Certainly, the mere belief that they are helping helps the legion of women who must needs otherwise become nervous wrecks from idly brooding on the dangers that their menfolk are enduring; certainly the knitted socks, wristlets and "Balacava-caps" are sadly required and gladly used for the purposes for which they are intended; and certainly, the full half of this knitting, going as it does to the Belgian refugees, finds a ready gratitude among the destitute who have been driven from

their homes with no clothes save those which they were wearing when they ran away.

Women take their knitting to the theater: you can see the needles flashing in pit and stalls, in the gallery and boxes. Women take their knitting out to dinner: I have seen it in the restaurant of the Carlton; more times than not, when I have dined in an Englishman's house since the war began, we men, upon our return to the drawing-room, found our hostess and all her women-guests engaged in this work for the Belgian Relief foundation. It is going on in every part of the island, this work, and in every class of society; in my own village I have seen the cottager in her kitchen knitting socks for the Belgians and the daughters of a baron in their library knitting mufflers for the Belgians. The cook in the hospital-kitchen knitted between meals for them, and a Belgian convalescent, a broad-faced Fleming, smilingly thanked her, in appropriate gestures, for looking after his stomach and his feet. Crossing on the *Franconia*, when I returned home, was Kather-

ine Goodson, the pianist, on her way to start her annual American tour: she was so busy knitting that she had scarcely time to practice; her husband, Arthur Hinton, the composer, had to take her knitting from her in order to hurry her into the customs-shed when the vessel docked at New York.

Men and boys, unable otherwise to help, or helping this way among other ways, have taken up the needle: at one of England's best known public schools the most manly of the boys, the leaders in athletics, organized knitting-classes and sent the products of their leisure to Belgian refugees. An acquaintance of mine asked his son what he wanted for a Christmas present, and received the reply: "Wool, to knit for my Belgians, and boodle to buy more wool with." Once, when the women had left the table in a large London house, and the men turned to their cigars and port, one of the men produced a pair of needles and some yarn.

"You gentlemen will pardon me," he said, unsmiling. "I've given up tobacco and taken

to this. It may help the Belgians, and it keeps me occupied."

That man was a Judge more feared by criminals than any other judge upon the English bench.

The Boy Scouts came in for considerable criticism before the war, but have been both useful and willing in their service to refugees—though sometimes a little more the latter than the former. At a refugees' hostel near London, one was always kept on duty at the door to prevent the entrance of the inquisitive and to block the possible prying of German spies, who have been known to seek at these hostels such information concerning the Belgian army's losses and temper as can be picked up there. Asked how he discriminated, the little door-keeper replied:

"If a visitor comes arsking for a Belgian an' carn't tell wot 'is business is, I s'y the Belgian's not at 'ome. If the person keeps a'comin' back, I sends up word to the Belgian an' arsk does 'e want to see 'im."

"But suppose the visitor speaks French? You don't speak French, do you?"

"No," was the scornful rejoinder; "I don't speak none of them foreign languages, I don't. But if the visitor talks somethink I carn't understand, I know 'e must be a Belgian an' so I shows 'im right in."

This kindly concern for the refugees and invalids was not without its amusing phases. I remember being at the house of a country doctor when there came a long-awaited telegram asking how many convalescing Belgian soldiers he could next day house in his improvised hospital. The doctor had long wanted this chance to help, but, when it came, he lost his head completely.

"I suppose I had better just answer: 'Yes, fifteen,' " he suggested.

I pointed out that the telegram of inquiry must be one of many, and that unless he made it fuller and signed it, the medical officer to whom his answer was addressed would not understand it.

"You write it," said the doctor, "and hand it in as you pass the post-office. Here's a shilling to pay for it."

"It doesn't have to be paid for," I said. "It's an O.H.S. message."— That is, "On His Majesty's Service."

That evening the doctor was busy, and with large results. Next day, to meet the train that bore the patients, and to convey them to the hospital, he had two motor-cars and three stretchers. He himself appeared in full Red Cross uniform; he had a trio of his local Red Cross women-nurses, in cap and apron, beside him, and behind, drawn up in ordered ranks about their stretchers, the twenty men of the village who composed its Red Cross ambulance-corps.

Out of the train stepped the fifteen patients. They were, as the telegram of inquiry had said, convalescent, and, except for four who took advantage of the motor-cars, they all walked to the hospital.

Of the stories that I heard from Belgian

refugees in England I have already published some elsewhere; more, I dare say, have been previously recorded by other hands. Only a few I shall here repeat.

I think I am correct in saying that one of the first, if indeed not quite the first, parties of war-driven Belgians to land in England was that party of Belgian soldiers who were brought to Folkestone by the French steamer *Le Nord* well along in August. There were eighty of these soldiers, all military cyclists, the sole survivors of a command two hundred and forty strong that had been reduced to its present proportions by the fighting about Namur. These survivors, every one of whom marvelously had his bicycle with him, had somehow managed to escape into French territory and had so made their way to Dunkirk. They were given a meal at Folkestone and were then sent on to Thorncliffe Camp for a short rest before returning to the front—all except one or two poor fellows who, rather badly wounded, were separated from their companions and shipped to hospitals.

Save for the fact that they were then a novelty, there was nothing remarkable about these passengers of *Le Nord*. What, however, was chiefly to be noted in their talk was what, later, I came to find in the talk of all the Belgian soldiers that I met with: a calm toleration for the German fighting-man and a hot hatred for the Prussian war-machine.

Indeed, among all the wounded Belgian soldiers that I talked with, either in Belgium or England, I had to search long before coming upon any sign of personal bitterness against the rank and file of the Germans considered as individuals. These Belgian military-men—officers and privates, but especially the latter—had, nearly every one of them, the soundest sort of philosophy: that philosophy which comes from practical experience of the subject philosophized about. It was a former café-waiter in Brussels, one of the defenders of Namur, who put the case clearest to me:

“In a conquered town,” said he, “these German soldiers go mad, and that is terrible. But first some one had to send them forth to con-

quer and go mad, and that is more terrible still."

The Belgian hates Prussian militarism for what it has done to Belgium and the Belgians; but he knows that his remedy lies in collective resistance and not in individual reprisal.

To this the only exception that I discovered, I came across close to my own home—in the ward of Lord Airedale's hospital at Cober Hill, Cloughton. There, among the first batch of Belgian wounded to arrive, was one young man that scarcely ever spoke, even to his comrades. He was very young of body, but his face was old. All night, the nurses said, he lay awake, staring at the ceiling; all day he stood by a window looking out across the blue North Sea.

"You see that man?" said one of his fellows. "He wants to get well quick and fight again. He wants to kill Germans with his own two hands, and to die killing them. He lived at Rotselaer, and there, his wife having died, he left his little son, a boy six years old. That little boy a German soldier killed for him."

My informant's voice was loud enough for



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**"DESPOILED OF EVERYTHING SAVE WHAT THEY CARRIED IN THEIR  
ARMS AND ON THEIR BACKS,"**



the father to hear; but he gave no token of heeding: he kept his eyes to the window, looking out across the blue North Sea.

Mostly, I found, the war had come as so much of a surprise to these Belgians that they had not ceased thinking of Germany as Belgium's protective elder brother before German shells were blowing Belgian heads off. "So quickly," sighed a soldier that I talked with in one hospital—a piece of shrapnel had torn his leg—"it all came so quickly! I was a clerk in Antwerp, and we were given but one hour's warning. Think of it: one hour in which to say good-by, perhaps forever, to one's wife and little children! We expected no war; but like that the Germans came upon us. I was at work in the shop; four hours later I was fighting at Liège."

Other sorts of stories one came across, and is glad to be able to set down here. To the military hospital at Lincoln, which is but a few hours' ride from Scarborough, there was brought a thrice-wounded Belgian soldier. He was more anxious to know of his parents'

welfare than to tell them of his own condition. Therefore, since he had the strength to write only a few lines, the note that he addressed to them contained merely a word concerning his whereabouts and his hurts, and was otherwise devoted entirely to inquiries. The one chance in a thousand happened: somebody able to get through the first German lines took that note and others with him, handed it to somebody else, who could enter Liège, where our soldier's father and mother lived, and so it reached its destination.

The old couple were penniless; leagues of angry sea and miles of devastated country occupied by an enemy's soldiery, lay between them and Lincoln. Their age would have made the journey dangerous in times of peace; in these times it threatened starvation by the wayside and death by rope or rifle, should suspicion be aroused in any of the thousands of invaders among whose camps the route lay. Nevertheless, that father and mother, thinking only of their son wounded in a foreign land, resolved to go to him.

They borrowed a wheelbarrow from one neighbor and filled it with potatoes borrowed from another friend. The old man pushed the barrow before him, his wife trudging at his side. In their peasants' costumes, they everywhere posed as persons returning to their home, which was always in the village next ahead. A series of miracles protected them: the potatoes were not seized; the travelers were not once suspected; fellow Belgians fed them; they slept in ditches and in fields; they even crossed, unmolested, the frontier. Their one guide was now their son's note, hidden in the old woman's stocking; but fortune remained kindly: a man with a heart paid their passage to England, and they found their son recovering in the Lincoln hospital.

To a hospital that I frequently visited a limping Tommy was sent. The nurses had been doing a little harmless hero-worshiping before the Belgian soldiers, who were the only other patients; now the Belgians, all men that had suffered severe wounds in the heaviest fighting of the war's early days, clustered about the

newcomer. The one English-speaking Belgian began, on behalf of his fellows, an eager interrogation: they all wanted to hear the Englishman's accounts of battle.

"'Ow was it?" asked the self-appointed interpreter.

"'Ow was wot?" Tommy sullenly countered.

"The battle."

"Wot battle?"

The interpreter was 'disconcerted, but not permanently so.

"De battle where you was 'it," he explained.

"My wound ain't nothink," said Tommy with a darkly conscious modesty.

"But you are hurted?"

"Course I am."

"In foot?"

"Yes: carn't you see I'm limpin'?"

"Schwapnel?"

"Wot?"

"Schwapnel. Was wot 'it you foot schwapnel?"

"No."

"No? Den maybe a r-r-rifle-bullet?"

"No, nor it wasn't no lydite bomb, nor no forty-two-centimeter shell, neither."

"And not schwapnel?" persisted the interpreter.

The Tommy suddenly shook his fist under the Belgian soldier's nose.

"Now, don't you try an' 'ave your little joke with me," he thundered. "I knows your sort o' merry jester, I does; an' I won't take no nonsense from 'im!"

With that he turned and stalked out of the room with as much dignity as his foot would allow, leaving an amazed company behind him. Amazed, but admiring, too: they had always heard how Englishmen scorned to talk of their battle-scars, and here was a noble example.

They were not disillusioned until they learned the whole truth: the man was a Territorial; he had never been outside of England; he had tripped over a tent-post and sprained his ankle.

I remember, too, a wounded soldier in a Red Cross hospital in which my wife was working

in December, who had said good-by to his wife in August and had heard nothing from her or of her since. All that he knew was that the village in which he left her was afterwards burned to the ground, and that many of its women perished with it. One day he came to his nurse with a bit of shaking newspaper in his trembling hand.

That bit of paper he had torn from a copy of the London *Daily Sketch*. It contained a photograph, taken on a refugee-ship, of a group of Belgian refugees. There was nothing in the accompanying text to tell where the photograph had been taken, or whither the boat on which it was taken had been bound; but one face in the foreground was especially clear: the face of a young woman.

"Look, look!" gasped the soldier, while frank tears ran down his cheeks. "It is she! It is my wife. She does not know that I live; but, somewhere she is alive."

We counted that man lucky, for in a nearby cot lay a comrade whose first news of his wife since the third of August reached him three

months later and told him that a German shell had maimed her for life on October eighth.

After the arrival of *Le Nord*, Belgian soldiers were brought to England almost daily. "I never knew there were so many soldiers in Belgium," one tired little nurse said to me; and it really seemed at times as if every ranker in the Belgian army had been wounded and every wounded ranker brought to England.

The civilian refugees, however, never became a commonplace; one might as well talk of being bored by the sight of torture. Day after day they came, and day after day England, desperately pressed as she was by her own cares, found food and clothes and shelter for them. Each boatload brought its own appeal; it would be easy to fill three volumes such as this one with their stories, and every story a separate pull upon the heartstrings; but the story of the arrival of a single boatload must serve.

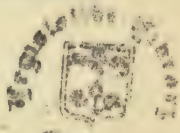
Nobody, I think, can ever forget it who saw the arrival at Tilbury of the first contingent of civilian refugees from Antwerp and its sur-

rounding villages. The British Government had chartered the Great Eastern Railway Company's boat, *Copenhagen*, to bring a thousand and, in the twilight of that autumnal evening, a little company stood in the dreary landing-shed, waiting the arrival of the steamer. There was a representative of the Local Government Board; there was Commander Coyst, of the railway. Behind waited the special train for the Liverpool-street Station, where Sir Arthur Downes and Inspector Oxley, also of the Local Government Board, would—with a committee of women, a staff of physicians and nurses, and a troop of Boy Scouts to carry the babies and such small belongings as the refugees might bring with them—meet the nation's guests and feed and house them in the Board's converted asylums at Edmon-ton.

Five o'clock struck, but the *Copenhagen* had not yet appeared. Five-thirty, and one of the clearer sighted picked her out from the craft in the river. Everybody went down the gang-way to the landing-stage. At six o'clock the

*Copenhagen* was ready to disembark her freight of fugitives.

Instead of the expected thousand, there were only two hundred and seventy in this first consignment; but no man could look on that little company and remain unmoved. They were, for the most part, of the poorest peasantry: some citizens of Malines, more cottagers from Compenhout, Hever, Bucken, Rotselaer and Jette. They had left behind them in ruins all that they had ever known of the comforts, even all that they had of the necessities, of life; there was not one that had not lost everything he held most dear. Childless gaffers, widowed women, orphaned children, they crowded to the rail, a ship-load of tragedies. In nearly every case, the man upon whom rested the burden of their subsistence had been swallowed up in the war. In many instances there were old fathers who had lost their daughters, mothers who had lost their children—none knowing where or how—in the awful turmoil of that last stampede from burning towns and along shell-bespattered highways. With hands and faces



travel-stained and tear-stained, their clothes torn and ragged, many barefoot, more hatless, their paltry rescued belongings wrapped in grotesque bundles of towels or newspapers, table-cloths or sheets, the eyes of each had that intensity of expression which comes only from looking long on horror; and yet now, with a new light painfully struggling in them, they bent their gaze on this river-shore in the land that offered them—rest. Some one among them proposed a “cheer for England”: I think the pathos of those broken voices responding to that proposal is without equal in history.

They came ashore, one old man kneeling and kissing the friendly soil. The waiting party of Englishmen, with the boisterousness that hides an Englishman’s tender emotions, fairly looted the station-buffet for them. Within half an hour, the train was bearing them to Liverpool Street.

Two priests came with that party: Père Butaye and Père van Heybuck, members of the Redemptionist Order. Perhaps the investigators that find no final proof of “atrocities by

German soldiers" in Belgium would care to hear what these priests had to say:

"We speak either from our own knowledge, or from the stories told us by the closely cross-examined parishioners and refugees in our care. We have the necessary names, dates and addresses, and are prepared to vouch for them.

"Near Bucken a woman was bayoneted. When the Belgian troops had retreated from that place, the Germans, entering it, buried alive several Belgian wounded who refused to tell in what direction the Belgian troops had gone. The people of Bucken managed to rescue some of these wounded, who are still alive to testify to what was done to them.

"Near Malines, Germans found a Belgian boy wandering in the fields. He is believed to have been looking for the body of his dead father. Those soldiers found death for him: they tied him fast to two dead bodies, and thus he remained until some friends discovered and loosed him, sixty hours afterward.

"The entire milk-supply was commandeered

by the Germans at Jette. It was more than they needed, but they refused to give any to the children. What they could not use, they wasted.

"A priest in a village near Louvain gathered all the women and children, and all the men and boys unfit for military service, into his church and his own house. Then he went to the invading Germans and told their commanding officer what he had done. He gave his word that no militant act would be committed by these people in his care. The officer's reply was a grim joke. He ordered ten men brought from the sacristy to be shot. When the men came out, they were told to run at their best speed, and as they ran, the soldiers and officers shot over their heads into the air. One of the women left in the church died from fright.

"In Malines a civilian feared for his wife and newly-born child. He refused to surrender the revolver that was his only weapon. Instead, he barricaded himself in his house and, when the German soldiers attacked it, he shot some of them. The enemy forced an entry.

They killed him: he had resisted them. But that was not the extent of what they did. Having killed the man that opposed them, they rushed upstairs to where the unoffending wife lay. Her too they killed. The baby they flung to its death out of a window."

Does all that sound incredible? The priests said it. I have merely set it down.

Some testimony, of course, you may doubt if you care to. This, for instance. It came from lips that, for my part, I do not care to doubt—from a Belgian nun, the nurse of two injured Belgian ladies, a mother and a daughter:

"There was a girl I knew in Visé, a good girl. Prussian soldiers attacked her. For what they did, if there are words, I do not know them. Seventeen, she was. If you could go to Maastricht, you would learn for yourself. She is in hospital there, that girl."

One wondered how much drink and blood-lust had to do with these things, and how much the close daily acquaintance of horror and the constant expectation of death.

"It is not the soldiers," one old man from Compenhout explained: "it is the wine that does it. They do not seem to understand wine; they drink too much of it. Oh, it is impossible to conceive how much wine they drink, those Prussians—officers and men, monsieur! You would not believe. Naturally, they become drunk. After their day's work—that is what they call it: their day's work—they become drunk. Drunk, one of them shoots a citizen, insults a girl, or strikes his companion who, also drunk, retaliates. Damage so done must be blamed on somebody, and the drunken men, ashamed, will not put the blame upon themselves, where it belongs. So they blame the people of the village, and that starts the massacre. It is very simple, really."

As for the alleged provocations to massacre, when Belgian citizens say that they did not offer resistance to the invaders, I am inclined at once to believe them, and this for the reason that, in the few cases in which they did offer armed resistance, I have found them ready to admit it. Herve and Battice, in the neighbor-

hood of Philippeville, offer cases in point:

"Yes, we fought," a cripple chuckled. "We were old men and little boys; they would not have us in the army; but we protected our homes: we fought—name of a name, how we fought! We killed many a gray-coat before they conquered. And then? Oh, then they made fifty of us bury the Germans we had killed. It took us four days," the man proudly added.

"And they did not hurt any of you?"

"Naturally, they killed us—all but me and a comrade. When their dead were buried, they made us dig one great trench. We knew what that trench was intended for. They made forty-eight of us sit on its edge, and shot them. My friend and I, they made us push in the bodies that had not fallen in and then fill up the trench. They marched us off as prisoners. I hid in a field one night and got away."

In one of the carriages of the special-train to Liverpool-street, sit a husband and wife, peasants whose house had been battered from over their heads. The man's face is haggard;

his eyes are dazed; his hands, folded in his lap, tremble. The woman's cheeks are red and bloated from tears; she clutches a baby to her breast. The members of the relief-committee question them, but the man is too stunned to speak, and it is long before the woman can find words.

"We had two children," she says at last: "this baby and a girl four years old. We all ran away together. There was a river to cross in the night, and many trying to cross it. Our boat was so crowded that the water came in. We thought we were all together, but when we reached land, my little girl was missing. It was impossible even to return and look for her". . .

When the train had been met at its London station, when the refugees were being led to the conveyances awaiting them, and when the crowd was slowly melting away, somebody noticed that one refugee had been momentarily forgotten.

This was an old woman who sat wearily against the wall. Her coarse clothes were mud-spattered. Under the edges of the shawl



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DISPOSSESSED

"The treasure with which she must begin life anew at eighty years: three francs, fifty centimes."



that covered her head, the hair crept, gray and scant. She hid her face in hands hardened by years of patient toil, but between her fingers one caught a glimpse of thin cheeks covered with a mesh of tiny wrinkles.

"Are you alone?" one asked her.

She did not speak. Her hands still to her face, she nodded.

"Have you no relatives?"

She shook her head.

"Nor friends?"

She shook her head.

"They are all lost or—dead?"

Again she nodded.

"No home? Your home is lost too?"

Her home was lost too.

"And no money?"

She lowered her hands. She fumbled in the depths of her skirt. She drew out a knotted handkerchief and unknotted it. There lay her entire capital, the guarded treasure with which she must begin life anew at eighty years: three francs, fifty centimes.

Seventy cents.

## IX

### “HANDS ACROSS THE SEA”

TO-DAY, in what, a few months since, was a prosperous and peaceful country, a nation stands on the bread-line.

Belgium is starving. She is starving, in spite of all that England, herself staggering under the heaviest native burden in her history, can nobly do for her. She is starving in spite of such help as France, herself in a death-struggle with an invading army, is marvelously rendering. She is starving in spite of those endeavors which Germany, now that the first madness of battle has passed, is making to repair something of that ruin which she has herself inflicted. These nations are at war; their most is hopelessly inadequate. Belgium is starving.

There is no man that, having known Belgium up to the fatal August of 1914 and then

returned to it three months later, would, if he had not read the newspapers, believe it to be the same peaceful country that he had loved. Even the printed and the spoken word are impotent to picture the present desolation. Whole cities are empty, whole towns destroyed, whole villages mere piles of shattered stone and mortar, whole districts of farmland stripped and trampled bare. Such factories as are not in ashes are closed for lack of raw material and market. The crops have vanished, and there is no seed to renew them.

What this means to the people—the homeless, scattered and dispossessed women, children, cripples and old men—it is easier for you to imagine than for me to tell. Those are the sufferers: the old men and cripples, the women and little children. Thousands of families are broken up, their members tramping separately the highways and byways, ignorant of one another's whereabouts or fate. They sleep, unprotected, beside the roads. They comb the ash-heaps; they scrape the dirty bits of tin that once were filled with condensed milk. Seven

millions are in want; one million four hundred thousand—and that number mounts daily—are absolutely without food of their own providing. Thirty thousand babies have been born in Belgium since August last. And now winter has come, and disease is at hand, to complete the destruction of a country that War, bending all the ingenuity of modern Science to its uses, has poured forth a fabulous fortune to devastate.

This is what, until last summer, was “Smiling Belgium.”

England’s work for these innocent sufferers, the preceding chapter has already, however inadequately, described. What France is doing the newspapers have carefully chronicled. By the terms of diplomatic agreements made since the war began, Belgium is France’s ward and England’s. By the terms of the Hague Convention, made when the war was still only a thing for alarmists to dream about, she is the care of all the world. But by the place that the United States of America has stubbornly and splendidly maintained in the face of all

threats, and of every temptation toward entangling and war-involving foreign alliances—by the reputation that we have grandly achieved as the champion of distress, the protector of the weak and the savior of the perishing in whatever portion of the globe—Belgium is ours to feed and house and clothe until that day when she can once more feed, house and clothe herself.

I have tried to indicate what England has done for Belgium—not what the Government has done for the Government of Belgium, but what the English people have done for the Belgian people—and I have given, perhaps, too much space to it; but my endeavor was to show the awakening and extent of the English people's sense of their duty to the people of Belgium, in order that I might forestall the possible criticism of Americans that the duty was not theirs, but Englishmen's. If I have at all succeeded, I have shown that England, engaged in a war in which she maintains Belgium's claims against Germany, can do no more than she is doing, and that what she is doing,

though much, is not enough to prevent an appalling disaster. What is true of England is true of France, whose very territory is invaded; and my only reason for not enlarging upon the aid rendered by France is that my personal knowledge of it is far less than my personal knowledge of the aid rendered by England. The willingness to help among the German people is made impotent by the position of the Germany army. None of the neutral nations, save our own, is strong enough to serve the present need.

When I came to the writing of this chapter, one peculiar difficulty was presented. I was keenly aware of the agony that reigns in Belgium where Albert, King of the Belgians, used to reign. I was keenly aware of the duty that lies upon every man acquainted with that agony to bring home the truth about it by every means in his power to every eye and ear that he can reach. And then there came the question:

"Is it possible that, somewhere in America, there is somebody cynical enough to complain: 'I have been tricked into reading this book by

the belief that, sitting at my ease, I should be pleasantly thrilled by pictures of battle, vicariously and safely excited by the shedding of blood—and now it turns out that the author has been trying to get some money out of me to feed a lot of people that never did anything for me?” ”

I do not believe that there is such a man anywhere in the world. I doubt if such a voice has yet been heard in England or France—yes, or in Germany. I cannot think that it will remain for an American to raise it. Nevertheless, if any reader does feel aggrieved because I am now making a special plea for a charity that France, England and Germany endorse, then I hope that that reader will never read another book of mine.

Again, it has been said to me that all attempts toward Belgian relief must expect opposition from German sympathizers in America: that I flatly question. More: I appeal directly to the German-born residents of America. Their relatives at home are in a country that is at war and cannot repair the damage which this war

has done in Belgium; by contributing to the Belgian-relief funds, German-born Americans in America can help to do what the vast majority of their relatives abroad would do if they could.

It is not my purpose to propitiate German sympathizers by suppressing facts that make for a hatred of Prussian militarism, nor is it my purpose to publish impossible stories of alleged German atrocities in order to wring sympathy for Belgium from persons that would, without the publication of such stories, stand aloof. It is my confident belief that the authenticated facts are sufficient.

There have been, for example, a good many narratives about Belgian children who appeared in England mutilated: their hands lopped off by German soldiers. A child with its hands roughly amputated, and the wounds uncared for, would bleed to death. Some acquaintances of a friend of mine in Yorkshire advertised that they would pay twenty pounds for every child brought them whom German soldiers had thus maimed—they would do this

and engage to provide for the children for life: the advertisement ran for several days in several papers, but brought no response. At last I came upon the following plausible explanation: a little Belgian lad, separated from his parents, had been brought to England in August by a kind-hearted Englishman, who found him wandering near the French frontier; both his hands had been cut off, and the stumps were still unhealed: he spoke only Flemish, which his guardian did not speak; he conveyed by some sort of signs the perfectly true information that he had suffered maltreatment by the invaders; but his benefactors, concluding that these sufferings were the amputations of his hands, erred, because, when an interpreter was at last found in England, the boy said that he had lost his hands in an accident with a mowing-machine before the Germans had reached his village.

On the other hand, according to a dispatch published in the *New York World*—and published, it was plain to see, with that paper's usual caution when presenting something that,

while undeniably "news" is contrary to all previously received evidence—was a statement to the effect that the British Government, after careful investigation, had found no final proof of "atrocities by German soldiers" in Belgium: "The report added that many Belgians had suffered severe hardships, but they should be charged up against the exigencies of war." If that dispatch correctly quotes an English governmental report, then my reply is the reply that will be made by any impartial observer whose investigation of the Belgians' stories has not been hampered by duties to his own nation in the throes of battle. If by "outrages" it means attacks on women, my reply is that even the testimony of loose women should not be too lightly neglected; that the conventionally-bred women who have been attacked suppress their evidence out of a sense of shame; and that the physical evidences found upon silent women in hospitals, and the accounts of innocent girls concerning details that they could not have invented, remain above contravention.

But the undisputed data are sufficient to make plain the duty of every man, woman and child, of every nationality and creed, who is possessed of an ounce of charity: the invasion of a neutral country; the wiping out of its villages; the decimation, for whatever reason and by whatever means, of its population; the placing of seven millions of its non-combatant citizens on an international bread-line—these things are not theories; they are facts. "The exigencies of war"? Yes, "the exigencies of war." What then?

Nor is it my purpose to belittle the beneficent achievements of American endeavor in those paths of battle which lie outside of Belgium. Our country has already done much throughout the entire theater of war. In the wake of every army, it has done wonders, not only in relieving suffering and distress, but in widening vastly love for American goodness of heart and respect for American efficiency, among Austrians and Germans, English, Belgians and French. The instance of the American Hos-

pital in Paris is perhaps the most familiar. Its work is not ineptly shown in a single incident that is now recalled to me.

There is an American I know who, after his first big success on the New York Stock Exchange, was wise enough to leave the market. He went to London and lived there for twenty years. For a great part of that time he was continued as a member of the house-committee of a certain well-known club, on which committee a prominent English army-officer also served. The American liked the Englishman; but the Englishman steadily and triumphantly opposed every plan that, in committee, the American suggested: my acquaintance was full of plans for the club's improvement; but the Englishman, one after another, put an end to them.

When the war broke out, the American could not obtain active service at the front, but his sympathies were with the Allies, and he managed to obtain an important post in the officers' pay-department, with an office in the rue de la Paix, Paris. To that bureau came daily a

typed list of such English officers as had, during the past twenty-four hours, been admitted to the American Hospital. To scan this was generally the duty of one of the American's clerks, but one day my acquaintance, in handing the list to that clerk, saw that there was only one name upon it, and so read the name. It was the name of the English officer who was his fellow-member of the London club's house-committee. A visit followed immediately.

The Englishman lay in bed. One of his legs had been amputated; the other was severely injured.

"Well," said he, "this puts the top on!"

"What does?" asked the American.

"Your coming here to see me."

"But why shouldn't I?"

The Englishman gathered his strength.

"Man alive," said he, "don't you know that I always used to dislike you and your confounded American hustle and resourcefulness? That is why I opposed everything you proposed in the club. There was nothing you suggested that didn't go against the grain of all my traditions

and sensibilities. Now, see what has happened to me. I was hit over there at the front—both legs smashed. I was too weak to whisper, but I heard one stretcher-gang discuss my case and pass on because they said I was going to die anyhow. Then another squad came up and took me to one of the dead-houses—which is what we call the French field-hospitals. There a young French surgeon, a mere boy, didn't cut my leg off: he hacked it off—no anæsthetics, mind you, and all the nurses busy elsewhere. When he wanted to begin on the other leg and said I should die if he didn't amputate it too, the pain had given me back my voice, and I told him I preferred to die, and I meant it: I'd had quite enough. I should have died, if a little American hadn't found me and brought me here to the American Hospital in Paris. Here a real surgeon saved my remaining leg, and here real nurses saved my life—Americans, doctor and all of them. Here I saw a real hospital, doing real work, and all brought about and performed by just that American hustle and resourcefulness that I had opposed in you

and in our club for years and years. I've seen a bit of what that sort of thing can do, and when I get well, so long as I live, if anybody complains of American methods to me, I shall do my best to knock him down."

One is, then, far from saying that Americans have not accomplished a great deal. Nevertheless, one does not hesitate to say that we must do more, must do it now, and must do it in Belgium and for the Belgians.

Why should Americans "mix in"; aren't we a peaceful people? We are—so were the Belgians!—and because we are, we have "mixed in" to relieve conditions, and must continue mixing. Why should one take charity abroad? Because charity is needed abroad. With the man who says that "charity begins at home," it generally stops there, too—when, indeed, it ever arrives there at all. Few of us are mad about Foreign Missions; but I have rarely known a churchgoer who said "I think Home Missions ought to come first, and I don't believe in Foreign Missions until we've attended to our home duties"—I have rarely known such a man

to be a conspicuous giver when there was a collection for Home Missions. Nor is the present a case for the spreading of any religion, or any ideal, ethical or national: it is a case of life and death.

There are hard times in America? I know it.—There are soup-kitchens in a score of cities? I know it.—There is a nightly breadline on lower Broadway, and an afternoon breadline at the Knickerbocker? I know it.—There are five hundred thousand persons out of work in New York alone? I know it.—But do *you* know that there are seven *million* persons destitute in Belgium?

*Charity has no nationality and knows none. It is not a product of justice; it is justice. To stand with folded hands and watch another nation starve: that is not neutrality; it is the last refinement of enmity. The duty of America, we have been told, is to be neutral; then the duty of America is charity.*

Than our relief-work in Belgium there has seldom been—for my part, I think there has never been—a more wonderful example of how



*Photographed from a clay-study of A Group of Refugees, by Gafton Nys, himself now a refugee in America.*

ON THE BREAD LINE



we Americans can combine generosity, speed and efficiency. Somebody truthfully declared that the greatest activity in the world to-day is the business of war. But for the carrying on of this particular war, preparations had been making for two decades. Certainly the second greatest activity in the world to-day is the business of helping the dispossessed Belgian non-combatants—and the need of that came upon an America absolutely unexpectant.

Yet to Belgium from American sources there have already gone 39,550 tons of supplies, making a total value of about \$2,373,000. At this writing, there are about 51,390 tons at sea, valued at \$3,083,400. Loading there are 10,510 tons representing an expenditure of over \$500,000. This makes a total of \$5,956,400 and to carry it eighteen steamers have been employed. There was the *Maesapequa*, the first of them all, starting on her initial voyage on November fourth, under a charter by the Rockefeller Foundation, which furnished her cargo; she reached Rotterdam on the 18th, delivered her supplies, returned and, with 3,527 more tons

valued at \$227,131, furnished by the Belgian Relief Fund, was back in Rotterdam on the 18th of January. The Foundation also sent out the *Neches*, from New York on December 12th, and the *Ferrona*, from Philadelphia on December 23rd, and supplied their 13,000 tons of provisions. It lent the *Agamemnon*, which arrived at Rotterdam on Christmas Day with a \$206,000 cargo of 25,300 tons—260 given by the Committee of Mercy and 25,040, to the value of \$183,064, by the Belgian Relief Fund. The New England Committee, at Boston, also co-operating with that Fund, sent out the *Harpalyce*, 8,470 tons, raised \$150,000 for its cargo and sent \$30,000 to the Belgian Relief Fund in New York. Eighteen steamers employed and twenty-one more under charter: the greatest relief-fleet that ever sailed the seas. The *Northwestern Miller* carried on a campaign that brought great supplies of flour from every large milling center; the Philadelphia newspapers raised funds by full-page advertisements, photographs and special articles; newspapers in every other big city, and in many

smaller ones, helped in the same way. Committees were formed and went to work throughout the country. There are upon the rolls of the Belgian Relief Fund alone the names of more than 20,000 contributors—individuals and groups representing close upon 100,000 men, women and children—from every State and territory in the Union and from Cuba and Hawaii. In its files are the ill-spelled letters of the illiterate, the typed communications of the millionaire.

Already there has begun a movement for "The Restoration of Belgian Homes and Households." "This work," writes Dr. van Dyke, "while the same in spirit and ultimate purpose, is quite distinct in form from that which is being done by the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, which has in view the revictualment of the whole civil population of that country, whose food supply has been either exhausted or carried away by the German army. We mean our title to cover whatever needs to be done to enable a poor family to get back to its home and to live in it. If the

house has a hole knocked in it, we will help them to mend it. If a peasant's cow has been stolen or killed, we will try to get him another one. If he needs seed to sow in his vegetable garden for next year, we will provide it for him. In short, we will try to do what we can to put the family in a state to go on with their life again."

I have mentioned the Rockefeller Foundation. Through it practically all the details of receiving and forwarding by steamer were handled for the Relief Fund. That Foundation bore the expenses of ocean-transportation, has itself shipped to Belgium 19,957,333 pounds of flour, rice, beans and bacon, peas, salt, lentils and coffee, and, exclusive of the cost of handling and transportation, has contributed to the relief of Belgium some \$1,100,000. It has spent in Belgian relief-work, or partly directed the expenditure, of \$1,500,000 in cash. Now it is planning to provide a colony of a hundred thousand Belgian refugees with raw materials and machinery for the manufacture of clothes: "those articles of clothing of which there is the most desperate need." But it still stands ready

to help the other branches of relief-work with which it at first allied itself simply to organize the shipping-facilities and from which it has withdrawn only because its work in this direction has now been satisfactorily accomplished.

The Commission for Relief in Belgium, at 71, Broadway, and the Belgian Relief Committee, at 10, Bridge Street, New York, are thus the chief organizations of Belgian relief in the United States. Take the case of the latter. In the first four months of its existence, ending January 5th, it organized scores of branches and formed a system that perfected the co-operation of scores more of independent bodies; it became a collecting-agency, tapping every district in the United States; it became a buying-agency, purchasing the best supplies at the lowest figure; it secured through the Rockefeller Foundation steamers for carrying its cargoes, and through the American ministers at London and Brussels, and the Commission and the Comité Central de Secours et d'Alimentation of Belgium, efficient distribution of supplies. It had collected, during this quarter

year, in cash \$776,475.85, in food about \$700,000 worth and in clothing about \$35,000 worth—a total of \$1,511,375.58. By its careful systematizing, by the powerful influences placed at its disposal and by the self-sacrifice of its staff, it has prevented all waste, duplication and overlapping; is able to make its purchases with its finger on the pulse of the market and its eye on constant maritime and cable advices regarding steamer-availability and the requirements of the hour when cargoes are due to arrive at the distribution-centers. The fact that the cost of express and freight shipments to New York, and all ocean transportation has been handled for it without cost by the Rockefeller Foundation or by the Commission, makes it possible for each contributor to know that ninety-nine cents out of every dollar he gives it will buy ninety-nine cents' worth of pure food at the lowest price and put that ninety-nine cents' worth of pure food into the mouths of the starving.

To-day I walked down to the Maritime Building on Bridge Street, where, in a room on

the first floor, are now this Fund's headquarters. You must know the place. As office-buildings go in New York, where they seem to rise in a night, this office-building is already old and white with briny traditions. Its windows bear the names of many a shipping-company: the Cunard, the Holland-American, the Russian-American, the Norwegian-American. The ground-glass panels of its many doors display the names of foreign firms; you can almost smell the odors of faraway ports, you do hear the echoes of strange tongues along its halls. Now, in at least that one part of it, pretty American typists clatter at their machines, American charity-workers pore, upon small pay and through long hours, over appeals and subscriptions, ledgers, invoices, bills-of-lading, manifests, and sit at the ends of lines that not only extend across the seas, but form a web one strand or another of which passes close to every city, village and farmhouse in the United States. American financiers put aside enormous operations to come here and help; American men and women of narrow means send here

a little of their little; Belgian refugees appear to seek reunion with their lost relatives and any work that can be procured for them; and from here goes out the food-supply of Belgium.

Whoso does not want to contribute to the Belgian Relief Fund should avoid visiting its offices immediately after the arrival at New York of any of the boats bearing Belgian refugees. Those refugees are few in number, and this for the excellent reason that only a small number can get to America; but such as do come here, bear Belgium's strongest appeal in their own eyes.

The first group consisted of a father and mother, their baby and the father's sister. Their approach was timid, their condition pitiable. The aunt had been in America before; she spoke French, but was so nervous that she could scarcely find words to tell her story. The family had fled from Antwerp during the bombardment. The father had been a licensed chauffeur; now he wanted any kind of work that could be given him.

Next came a father, mother, baby and grand-

father, all fit models for symbolical figures of Despair. The younger man had been a pilot, but there was no chance for him to get such work here. For a time it seemed that he must be given odd jobs and his dependents placed in an institution. The family was steeling itself for that one sacrifice more—the sacrifice of separation—when an Englishman resident in New York agreed to give the three adults work about his own house, the father as choreman, the mother as seamstress and the grandfather as gardener.

There is no need to run through the catalogue. They are willing to do anything, these Belgians—anxious to do honest work—that will keep them from starvation. Tobacconists have become bakers; blacksmiths shovel snow. They want work—nothing more do they ask of the Belgian priests that act as the bureau's interpreters and that these refugees regard in astonishment for an ecclesiastic clad, not in the flapping soutane of the Belgian prelate at home, but in the coat and trousers of the American priest. Shoemakers, chemists, diamond-cut-

ters have come to the Belgian-relief offices and have gone away as butlers and valets. Women teachers and saleswomen have turned into domestic-servants. There has been scarcely a case of one man, among all the men that presented themselves, who was fit for military service.

What I have written about the Belgian Relief Fund could be paralleled by a description of the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, since the two organizations coöperate; but I think I have said enough to show myself far from underestimating the generosity toward Belgium already magnificently manifested in America. My point is, however, that this generosity must continue until the Belgian fields have been replanted and their crops gathered in. Without that we shall have done nothing but prolong a misery ending in wholesale death.

It may be true that the duty of healing Belgium's wounds lies, in the first instance, at the door of Germany, who caused them; but, since Germany cannot heal those wounds, can we

Americans justify ourselves in permitting them to remain unstanched? It may be true that, failing Germany, the duty devolves upon fighting-Belgium's allies; but, since France and England can do no more than they have already nobly done and are doing, can we justify ourselves in a failure to save the non-combatant Belgians? It is indeed true that the other neutral nations are helping as far as they are able, and that thousands of Americans have helped and continue their aid; but so long as these efforts are insufficient, can the rest of America rest content? There is suffering among the non-combatants of each of the larger warring countries, and that suffering has its claims which must not go unsatisfied; but in each of those larger warring countries vast districts remain, and will remain, not directly affected by military operations, and of these each will help its neighbors in its own country, whereas there is no portion of Belgium that has not been stricken. There is a vast German population in the United States that will help sufferers in Germany, whereas the Belgians represent but a

tiny fraction of our population and for that very reason have a claim upon our population as a whole.

The United States is the only one of all the world's great powers that is not either at war or on war's brink. "Of all the foremost nations of the world," as Sir Gilbert Parker has put it, "the United States is the only one that can save Belgium from starvation if she will. She was the only nation the Germans would allow a foothold for humanity's sake and for Christ's sake in Belgium. Such an opportunity, such responsibility, no nation ever had in the history of the world. There is enough food wasted in the average American household in one day to keep a Belgian for a fortnight. . . . They want in Belgium 300,000 tons of food a month. The American Relief Commission is asking for 8,000 tons a month, one quarter of the normal requirements, one half a soldier's rations for each Belgian. The American Commission needs \$5,000,000 a month until next harvest. . . . Probably there are 18,000,000 homes (in America). How many will deny themselves a

meal for Belgium?” England can do no more; France can do no more; Germany can do no more; the little countries cannot do enough. Whatever the causes or the origin of the desolation, it is the duty of America, who can, to feed the desolate.

Perhaps you think that my observations of Belgium's condition are those of a prejudiced observer. I have, throughout this book, been careful in selecting my material. Of what I saw, I told only a little; of what I heard, I repeated only such stories as seemed to me either to be in themselves easily credible or to come from persons whose word could not be doubted. Another visitor to Belgium since its devastation, Mr. Arnold Bennett, has written: “Many districts are nothing but grave-yards. There is no seed to sow. There are no implements. There is no money. There is no credit. There is no transport. . . . Every home in Belgium wants help.” But Mr. Bennett is an Englishman. Let me now briefly refer to some observers who must be unprejudiced.

Dr. P. H. Williams is a New Yorker. At

the suggestion of the Rockefeller Foundation, he volunteered his services to direct, at Liège, the operations of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, whose headquarters are at 71, Broadway, New York. This is what he says:

"The impressions I take away from Liège are of wonder that a people can suffer so much in silence, and of admiration for the bravery which enables them to do it. *These Belgians*—all the suffering Belgians—*never complain*, but they never laugh. This stoicism would mislead even trained observers.

"Yet, in the province of Liège alone nearly 30,000 out of a population of 900,000 are absolutely destitute and entirely dependent upon the commission for food to keep them alive. In the principal towns, Liège, Verviers, and Spa, distress is most acute because the iron mills, gun-works, rubber-tire factories, zinc-mines and other industries are closed. Practically the only exception is found in the coal-mines, which are being worked three days a week to obtain fuel to keep the people from freezing. During

the month I was in Liège, it snowed or rained every day, and when I left, the province was covered with a thick blanket of snow.

“A little girl at Liège who had been lucky enough to get a warm petticoat among the Christmas presents distributed by the Commission, wrote to the American child who sent it: ‘Our dear curé is dead. Our Burgomaster, who was a doctor and gave all his time to the poor, has been shot. My father was shot, and I am now living with nuns, eating bread sent from America.’ ”

Dr. Williams continues: “At Louvain and other places Belgian communal authorities are laying out boulevards and other municipal improvements planned long ago, simply to provide work for the people. They can keep this work going only three days of a week, and in payment men are given paper bonds, which are not negotiable outside the community in which they live, although with them they can buy their rations of bread and soup.

“In smaller towns which have been destroyed men are being employed under the same system

to pile up bricks which still litter the streets and tell of bombardments the world has almost forgotten. All these operations are in the hands of Relief Committees.

"In the country districts of Liège Province, farmers are tilling the soil, but they have no horses, and they are being compelled to sell their cattle for slaughter, as cattle fodder has been requisitioned for the cavalry. . . . The supply of milk is rapidly disappearing.

"At least 30,000 people line up once a day for bread and soup at twelve canteens established by the Commission in Liège. You see no able-bodied young men; there are only old women, children and cripples. The distribution starts at 8:30 o'clock in the morning and is not finished at the principal stations until eleven. The women place their half-pound loaves in net bags, and old men wrap theirs in bandanna handkerchiefs. . . . Then they go to another canteen to get their allowance of soup.

"Rich and poor all have to send for bread, and all get the same supply. 'Rich' is a term of irony, but I use it comparatively to distinguish

the distressed from the destitute. Think of steel-magnates, university professors, and well-to-do women, accustomed to living luxuriously on investments which now bring in no income, being obliged to stand in a bread-line! Within a few months there will be no distinctions to make, because practically every person in Belgium will be dependent on the canteens. Every one's private means will have disappeared. Before the Commission got into operation, scores of small towns had no bread at all. . . .

"Belgian physicians are doing splendid work both in relieving distress and in attending prisoners and wounded. . . . So far as I know not one morsel of the food so generously supplied to Belgium is being taken by the Germans. It is only fair to say the Germans have given us every assistance, not only in the distribution of relief supplies, but in clearing the canals of broken bridges, so that our barges can reach towns and villages whose people would otherwise starve."

Another American observer is our Minister to Holland, Dr. van Dyke. Of what he saw in

the Belgian refugee-camps in Holland he wrote in a letter :

“I visited carefully the refugee camps at Rosendaal and Bergen Op Zoom, small towns which have entertained from fifty to eighty thousand Belgian refugees. In other still smaller villages along the Dutch frontier, the proportion of refugees to inhabitants was even larger. In one place of about 5,000 population there were 30,000 refugees who arrived within twenty-four hours; most of these, however, went on to Rotterdam, Amsterdam, or The Hague. At Rosendaal and Bergen Op Zoom there still remain about 25,000 refugees in each place. The condition of these people is most pitiable. For the most part they are without money. They arrived in great haste, and in a terrified condition, pouring into the country in crowded trains, and in such carts and wagons as they could find, and trudging on foot along the roads. The majority, of course, are women and children, and there are many tiny babies, some born during the flight. There are all

sorts of sicknesses among the fugitives, but there is, as yet, no epidemic. . . . The people of Holland have risen magnificently to bear the weight of the great burden which has been thrown upon them. Many private houses in every city and town have been thrown open to receive fugitives, and large public refuges have been provided. . . .

"I motored through to Antwerp, and made an examination of that city, and of the small cities lying between there and Brussels. My object was to determine how far it would be safe for the refugees to go back at once to Belgium.

"So far as the attitude of the military authorities is concerned, I believe there is no danger whatever for non-combatants in returning. Antwerp itself is not so much injured as to render it uninhabitable for the greater part of the population. A very large majority of the houses are standing and uninjured, especially in the poorer quarters of the city. The only serious problems connected with the return

of the refugees to Antwerp are the water supply, the question of employment, and the question of food.

“In regard to the smaller cities in the neighborhood, the case is entirely different. For example, the towns Waelhem, Mechelen, Duffel and Lier are reduced practically to ruins, and are certainly not in a condition to receive back more than one-third of their ordinary population. There is, moreover, a smell of decay in the air which may, at any time, breed a pestilence. The resumption of the ordinary industries of these places is absolutely out of the question, as the factories and workshops are all knocked to pieces. To send people back to their homes when those homes no longer exist, I believe to be cruel. There are, I suppose, ten or a dozen other small towns in Belgium which are practically in the same condition as those I visited, desolate and uninhabitable, half of their houses wrecked; a great many scattered and isolated farmhouses which have been practically destroyed; and a considerable portion of the land under cultivation has been laid waste,

either by military operations or by inundation for defense.”

I cannot put the case better than it was put by the *New York Nation*: “Nobody even pretends that the tale of woe is exaggerated. We say nothing about causes; we say nothing about guilt; what we are speaking of is the fearful desolation and ruin, the heart-rending distress, the unspeakable agony of thousands of non-combatants who, a few short weeks ago, were dwellers in quiet and happy homes, and who are now wanderers on the face of the earth—fatherless, perhaps, or widowed; homeless and forlorn and almost hopeless, surely. Concerning their state, there is unfortunately no room for doubt or controversy; with cities and towns and villages given to the flames, and the whole countryside ravaged by the countless hosts of the invaders, no voice can be lifted up to say that the thing is not fully as appalling as it is imagined. No, the trouble is all the other way. Imagination is all too feeble to body forth the truth. The mere extent of the misery defies realization; the individual horrors of the scene

are too infinitely varied to permit of any attempt to grasp them."

Nor is the end yet. A short time since, in conversation with the King of the Belgians, one said that final victory could not long fly the Allies' arms.

"Yes," replied the King sadly, "there is no doubt that victory will come to our armies; but, even so, what is to become of my poor people?"

I heard, at York, this subject discussed by one of the men best qualified to discuss it: Dr. Charles Sarolea, now Belgian consul at Edinburgh.

"Germany," he said, "has committed more vandalism and destruction during a few months in Belgium than all the European nations who fought there for five hundred years, and now the worst is to come, because, when the Germans are driven back, they will do their utmost to make their final stand in Belgium, and we shall have to bombard Belgian cities in order to drive the Germans out. This is the greatest tragedy of the war, that a country which originally had no connection with the quarrels

of the Great Powers has suffered first, has suffered most and will suffer longest. I shall never forget the melancholy procession of refugees from Malines to Antwerp which accompanied the retreating Belgian army. The phenomenon of the whole nation fleeing was absolutely unique in history. And the fate of those Belgian people who remained is even more appalling than that of the panic-stricken wanderers, because Belgium is threatened with the most ghastly famine of modern times. Starvation has begun. What will happen when the Germans are driven back into Belgium, and two million soldiers have to live on the country?”

That is an old phrase, “Hands Across the Sea.” It has been often laughed at, often abused. Perhaps it is a little sentimental. Yet we Americans have more than once made it real, practical, helpful. We have begun to make it real and practical and helpful in the cause of the non-combatant Belgians; but unless we keep on—unless, excellent as our relief-work has been, self-sacrificing as it has been—

we continue it, day by day, and month in and month out, until next harvest-time, Belgium, now a country of the destitute, will have become a country of the dead. This is not a moment for postponement. What you can, you must give not to-morrow, but to-day—to-day, *now*, before it is too late. We have seen that there are thousands in America who have given; how many millions are there who have not? Those who have given must continue to give, must urge others to give, each all that he can spare. In New York City alone. For every person in New York City that has failed to contribute there is across the sea, "a Belgian woman, child, infant, old man, invalid—now—to-day—homeless, helpless and in direct need." Death keeps the books and strikes the balance: for every decrease of twenty-five dollars, he will snuff out an innocent life.

To keep this balance on the debit side will be no easy task. It will cost America \$2,500,000. a month to feed each starving Belgian only ten ounces of bread a day—and that means a total gift of a hundred-million pounds of flour every

four weeks. It is toward the purchase of that vast total that I make my appeal to you. For these ten ounces of bread a day to each starving non-combatant Belgian I confidently ask the help of the American public. I ask you to send what money you can to the Belgian Relief Fund. When you send it, you know that it will be spent in America for American materials, that American labor will load the supplies, that American ships will carry them, that they will be received by American agents and distributed by American consuls. You know this, and you know that ninety-nine cents of your dollar will, in the shape of pure food, bought at the lowest price, go directly to the people that you want to help.

And supposing that the needed help is given—supposing that the people of the United States win for themselves the high glory of saving all Belgium—what then? What is to happen when this war has ended?

Herr Basserman is leader of the National Liberals in the German Reichstag. The Berlin *Vorwärts* quotes him as saying: “We shall

hold fast for all time the countries which have been fertilized by German blood." Undoubtedly, should the war end before April, Germany would make demands which might lead to a suspicion that her invasion of neutral Belgium was not so much a "military necessity" as an endeavor to establish claims to a coastal country originally unconcerned in the conflict; men would think that the whole purpose of Germany's entrance into the war, however cleverly concealed at the time of its conception, was the capture of Belgium's sea-front. But Belgium and the Belgians are resolved upon maintaining their nationality.

I have been asked why, if they are in such desperate straits at home, the Belgians do not all come here. There are a dozen good answers, but the best is this: they can't. The chief duty of America to Belgium lies, at present, in Belgium. There the vast bulk of the work must go forward. Said the *New York Evening Sun* a little while since: "There is to be a Belgium, populated with folk of Belgian descent, after this war. It will mean a loss

to us, to every nation that would otherwise eagerly welcome the influx of some of the most desirable human material in the world. And to the refugees themselves repatriation can but wait on many a bitter day of sorely tried hopes, empty hearts and painful separations. How infinitely more comfortable for them to resign the unrestful promptings of mere sentiment, and turn their hands to taking up life and accomplishing their own well-being wherever they find these boons! Yet losers though we are through the possible failure to gain a heavy national reënforcement of sound, intelligent, thoroughbred human material, . . . we cannot but respect the stubborn purpose in this people. Even . . . at the depth of their abasement, they are tense with the resolve to rise as a nation again . . . and to reap, on some future autumn day, their own fields. The purpose may be visionary, or those holding it may know their own secret strength to accomplish through what they endure; in any case the unfortunates command the thorough respect of those who in less tried countries are succoring them.”

For my own part, I do not believe that this purpose is only visionary; for my part, I believe that, evil as present circumstances are, Belgium and its people will rise to a new strength and a new glory out of their ashes. The little country is a land of ruin. Beautiful churches and historic monuments have crumbled away, which no hand of man can ever restore. Families have been separated which none can reunite. Lives have been lost and wrongs done, which nothing can revive or repair. These things are beyond money. On the other hand, whole towns must be rebuilt; vast industries and countless businesses must be recreated; great stretches of once arable land must be recultivated; an entire civilization must be made anew—and *these* things will indeed be done. While yet the masonry of the past is warm from the fire that razed it, while yet the earth is damp with blood and wet with tears, Belgians will begin to erect the buildings and plow the fields of that Belgium of the future which will be greater than any Belgium of the times that are gone. A century—two centuries—may be

needed to complete this titan task, but, begun at once, the task will be completed; Belgium's greatest hour is knocking at the door of her darkest distress and, through whatever difficulties, the Belgians will meet it and make the utmost of all it offers. Belgium, crucified and buried, shall rise again.

We have the chance so to do that, in the hour of her resurrection, Belgium may say: “America made this resurrection possible; from the door of our tomb, it was the people of America that rolled away the stone.” It is the opportunity, it is the duty, of the American people to care for these helpless ones against that near hour when they shall be able to begin to help, as they are so eager to help, themselves. Now they starve, an entire nation, and only we can save them. Wherever lies the guilt of bringing Belgium to her present condition, so long as we can restore her and do not, the guilt of leaving to death her old men, her widowed women and her little children will lie with us.

It is useless for us to ask ourselves Cain's question:

“Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Duty, if you wish so to call it—God, if you will—has but one answer:

“Yes.”

**THE END**













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